ANOTHER ESSAY
For Investigation of the Truth,
IN ANSWER
TO TWO
QUESTIONS,
Concerning { I. *THE SUBJECT of BAPTISM.*
II. *THE CONSOCIATION of CHURCHES.*

By *JOHN DAVENPORT* B. of D. and Pastor of the *Church* of *Christ*, at *New-Haven*, in NEW-ENGLAND.

Matth.17.5. *This is my beloved Son: hear him.*
2 Cor.13.8. *We can do nothing against the Truth; but for the Truth.*
1 Thess.5.21. *Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.*

Tertull. de Vel. Virg.

Veritati nemo præscribere potest; non spatium temporum, non Patrocinium Personarum, non Privilegium Regionum: ex his enim ferè Consuetudo initium, ab aliqua ignorantia vel simplicitate, sortita, in usum, per successionem, corroboratur, & ita adversus veritatem vindicatur. Sed Dominus noster Christus *Veritatem* se, non consuetudinem, Cognominavit. Si semper Christus & prior omnibus, æque veritas sempiterna & antiqua res est. Viderint ergo quibus novum est, quod sibi vetus est

Cypr. Cæcilio. Epistola.

Si solus Christus audiendus est; non debemus attendere quid aliquis ante nos faciendum putaverit, sed quid, qui ante omnes est, Christus Prior fecerit, & faciendum præceperit.

Item & cæteri in Concil. Carthag. Stephano.

Scimus quosdam quod semel imbiberint nolle deponere, nec propositum suum facile mutare, sed salvo inter Collegas pacis, & concordiæ vinculo, quædam propria quæ apud se semel sint usurpata, retinere. Quâ in re nec nos cuiquam facimus aut legem damus, cum habeat in Ecclesiæ administratione voluntatis suæ arbitrium liberum unusquisque Præpositus rationem actus sui Domino redditurus.

Amicus *Socrates*, amicus *Plato*, magis amica *Veritas*.

Non eadem sentire bonos de rebus iisdem
incolumi licuit semper amicitiâ

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AN APOLOGETICAL PREFACE. TO THE READER.

By [illegible] who afterwards [illegible]

IT was an Observation (or an Inspiration rather) of holy [a] Brightman's, That some faithful ones in a Wilderness should have the most clear Discoveries of the Abominations of the Man of Sin: which Prophetick passage of that Reverend and Learned Writer, some have applied unto those worthy Confessors in New-England, who forsook their Country and Fathers houses, and left a pleasant Land, farre dearer to them then their lives, for the Testimony of Jesus; and upon no other account, but onely that so they might see the Lord in his Sanctuary, and Worship him whom their Souls love, in the Beauties of Holiness; where indeed they have seen him walking in the midst of his golden Candlesticks. So much the more sad it is to consider, that there should be any Declensions or Contentions amongst a People for whom the Lord hath done such wondrous things. We hope that none will be so injurious and unreasonable, as to impute it unto any defect in the Way (even The good Old Congregational-Way) of Government, which these Churches have hitherto Professed, that there should such Differences in judgement arise about things of a lesser moment. Do we not know, that even in the Churches Planted by the Apostles themselves, there arose no small dissention? Acts 15. 2. Yea, that there was a * Paroxysm between a Paul and a Barnabas? Let Rome glory in her Peace against all Reformed Churches, shall we therefore think that all our Foundations are out of course? True it is, our hearts cannot but mourn and bleed, that ever it should be told in Gath, or published in the streets of Askelon, that there are any different Apprehensions amongst us: And in that respect we could gladly have forborn the Publication of the ensuing Essay. Yet, when we remember, that [b] Variety of Judgements may stand with Unity of Affections, and that Disputation is the way to finde out Truth, Ex collisione ingeniorum fit

* ἐγένετο παροξυσμὸς Act. 15. 39.

[b] Opinionum varietas & opinantium unitas, non sunt ἀσύμφατα.

fit scintilla veritatis; *and, that* [d] He that judgeth a Cause before he hath heard both parties speaking, although he should judge rightly, is not a righteous Judge, *We are willing that the World should see what is here presented. But especially, being perswaded that* the Honour of God, and of his Truth, *require this as a duty at our hands, We durst not hinder what is here maintained from coming into light, lest we should one day have it laid unto our Charge, that* we did withhold the Truth in unrighteousness. *And, in very deed, our Opinion of what is here by the Reverend Author asserted, is such, as that we do believe it will tend to our* rejoycing in the day of the Lord Jesus, *that ever we were made instrumental to bring the Truth into publick view, whereby the World might fare the better for it. We are to* follow Peace, *but not with the* loss of Truth: *But when* Truth *may be discovered without any hazard unto* Peace, *and* oneness of Affection, (*is we hope the case is so in the publication of this Elaborate* Essay) *we should be very injurious indeed, if we did not what in us lay to forward it. Moreover, what is here held forth, ought to be regarded upon more accounts then one.* Salvian *his Observation is too often found true, that* Men in reading Books look more at [e] *Quis*, then *Quid scripsit*; who hath written, then what he hath written. *If we respect either of these, the following Discourse may be commended to the Reader:* The Author is a Commendation of the thing Written; and the thing Written is a Commendation of the Author. *As for the Author,* His praise is in the Gospel throughout all the Churches; *and indeed,* His Works praise him in the Gates. *Well did Mr.* Cotton *give this Testimony concerning him, that* He is a [f] Man mighty in Judgement, and Learning, and Singular Prudence. *And we doubt not but those that love and honour him farre less then we do, yet will say, that* He is one of a thousand. *It is indeed* an evil under the Sun, to have men's persons in admiration, *so as to take any man's* αὐτος ἔφη *for a demonstration: yet there are some Writings which are the more to be respected, because of the Writer.* Logicians *know, that* Testimonies are to be more or less valued, according to the person Testifying. *And truly, if there be any man amongst us, whose words deserve regarding for his sake that speaks them, then so do the words of this Judicious, Learned, and Holy man. Furthermore, if we consider* the Thing written, *it calls for due respect*

and

d *Qui statuit aliquid parte inauditâ alterâ, æquum licet statuerit judex haud æquus fuerit.* Sen. Trag.

e *Salvian. de Averit. l. 1.*

f *Davenportus, Judicio, eruditione, & singulari Prudentiâ pollet.* Cotton. Præfat. Apol. ad Norton. Resp. Apollon.

and reverence. As that for-ever famous Dr. [g] Ames *said of the most Scholastically-Learned Dr.* Twisse, *so may we much more say, that* We are not amongst the number of those who can adde any thing by our Testimony, unto the esteem of what is here maintained. *Nevertheless, having diligently perused this* Essay, *we hold it our duty to declare unto the World,* That we fully concurre (as to the Summe and Substance thereof) with what is here maintained and managed with great Wisdome and Piety, and irrefragable Strength and Solidity. *We shall say no more to Apologize for our Publishing of this* Reply: *But having this opportunity of speaking unto the World, we deem it meet to adde something, in the behalf of those who went under the Notion of* Dissenting Brethren, *in the late* Synod held at Boston. *We perceive, that there are many things Objected against them; and therefore, that so their Cause may not thereby be prejudiced, it is needful that something should be said for the removal thereof.*

g Ames. ad Lect. in Twiss vindic. contra Arminium.

First, it is Objected, That there were but a few in comparison, who Dissented from the major part of the Assembly.

Answ. *Suppose it were so; Is* Truth bound up to Number? *It was, indeed, a sore Temptation to* Luther, *when it was Objected to him,* Tune solus sapis? *Is there never a wise man in the world but you? It may be the same thing hath been as great a Temptation to some of us. In the* Council of Constance, *one of the Prelates said unto that blessed Martyr* John Husse, [h] That he should never shew himself so Arrogant, as to preferre his own Opinion above the Judgement of the whole Council. *Yet the whole Council (though it were an Universal Council) erred, and this one good man held the Truth against so many. Which we do not mention, as though we would prefer our own Judgements above others; such a thought we abhor. Neither is it in our intentions, any wayes to reflect upon those Honoured and Reverend Persons from whom we* Dissented; *nay, we look upon them as far better then our selves: onely by this Instance given, we may see, that in a Council (nay, an* Oecomenical Council) *a few (nay* one) *may dissent from all the rest, and yet neither* Ignorance *nor* Arrogance (*but* Truth *and* Conscience) *be the ground of it. In the* Nicen Council *there was but one* [i] Paphnutius, *who opposed all the rest of the* Synod, *that had concluded upon a gross Errour.*

h Histor. John Husse, fol. 23.

i Sozom. l. 1. c. 23. Magdeb. cent. 4. l. 7. pag. 486.

And if we look into our own Nation, there were but Five [k] Dissenting Brethren *who maintained the Truth (as we cannot but be perswaded) about* Church-Government, *against* Seventy *persons, who were also worthy of Respect and Honour. Now though our* Assembly *was not so Numerous as that, yet there were more then* Five twice told, *who could not see sufficient Reason to apprehend as others did. And that we are not singular in our apprehensions about these matters of* Controversie *now in agitation, appears from these following Witnesses. Blessed Mr.* Cotton *hath these very words:* [l] Infants cannot claim right to Baptism, but in the right of one of their Parents or both: where neither of the Parents cannot claim right to the Lords Supper, there their Infants cannot claim right to Baptism. *That Learned man, and Renowned Sufferer for Christ under those* Bloody Fathers (*as they would needs be stylea*) the Prelates, *even Mr.* Burton, *writes after this manner:* [m] It is not now under the Gospel, as it was from *Abraham* unto Christ. The Covenant was made with *Abraham* and his seed, so as by *virtue hereof* all the Male-infants of believing *Abraham* were and ought to be Circumcised: But now, under the Gospel, those onely are accounted *Abrahams* seed, who profess the Faith of *Abraham*; so as that the Covenant is Entailed onely to Believers now, and so to their children, *Acts* 2.39. If then the Parents refuse Christ, they cut themselves off from the Covenant, and therewith cut off their children. *And Mr.* Beverly (*a late ingenious Writer*) *speaking the judgement of the* Congregational-men *in* England, *as farre as he had knowledge thereof, hath such passages as these:* [n] Let me beseech my Presbyterian Brethren to consider, what sad advantage you give to bold Intrenchments upon the Lords Supper, by your too loose Administring Baptism; me-thinks you do but contradict your selves, when you suspend from one Ordinance Signal, and yet allow the other Ordinance of Baptism, which is as Signal, &c. *Nor was there ever any such inlargement of Baptism, as is here pleaded for, practised in any* gathered Churches *in* England, *that ever we knew, or could hear of.*

k Mr. *Tho:* Goodwyn, Mr. Nye, Mr. Sympson, Mr Burroughs, Mr. Bridge.

l Mr. *Cotton's Way of the Churches measured by the Golden Reed of the Sanctuary*, pag. 81.

m *Burton vindic. of Independent Churches*, p. 62.

n *Beverly* against *Towne*, p. 173, 174.

Secondly, it is Objected, That we deny all Church-membership unto Infants, which is a Principle of Anabaptism.

Answ. *Mr.* Rutherfurd *in his* Reply *to Mr.* Hooker, *chargeth him*

him with Principles of Anabaptism; *yet Mr.* Hooker *was never guilty of any such Opinions. So are we charged with* laying Cornerstones of Anabaptism; *but this is injuriously laid unto our charge: Yet let us not for fear of* Anabaptism, *do worse, even* Defile our selves with Antichristianism. *We are willing to profess, that we look upon it* as great a sin to baptize all Children, *(for that is no less then* [o] a violating of God, *as* Jerome *speaks)* as to baptize no Children; *though both Opinions, we think, are sinful. Neither can we plead* Guilty *unto that Charge,* That we deny all Church-membership unto any Infants; *we onely deny* that they are personal and immediate Members. *Indeed, as* personal Membership *is taken* subjectively, *so we say it is in Infants,* i.e. *their persons are* Recipients *of the* Adjunct *of Church-membership: But as* personal Membership *is taken* formally, i.e. *for such as have by themselves in their own persons entred into Covenant with God and his People, so Infants are not capable of* personal Church-membership. *It's strange to us to conceive, that they should have this* personal formal Membership, *and yet that they should not be subjects capable of* formal personal Censures. *We neither do, nor ever did deny,* That the persons of Infants of Believing Confederate Parents are brought under the Covenant; *onely we conceive, that* their Membership is [p] Conjunct with, and Dependent upon the Membership and Covenant of their Parents, so as to live and die therewith. *Hence Mr.* Cotton *hath these words;* [q] The Membership of Children (I mean Infants) is founded in the Faith and Profession of their Parents. *Hence the Childes Membership may continue after the Parents decease, because his Parents Faith and Covenant may live, though himself be dead; as 'tis said,* Abel being dead, yet speaketh. *So the Covenant, and Faith, and Prayers of a godly man, who is dead, yet live. Hence also, when the Parents are* Excommunicated, *the Membership of the Infant-childe is* cut off, *because* Excommunication *puts an end to the* Outward Covenant, *(which* Death it self *doth not do;) and if the* Root *be destroyed, the* Branches *cannot live. True it is, that we have made much use of that distinction of* Immediate, *and* Mediate Members, *which seems, to us, to carry a mighty and constraining Evidence of Scripture-light along with it, yea, and so as to solve (if rightly understood and managed) the strongest*

Objections

o *Dum Sacramenta violantur, ipse cuius sunt violatur.* Hieron. in Mal. 1.

p See the first *Essay* of this Reverend Author in Manuscript.

q Mr. Cotton, *Holiness of Church-members*, p. 63.

Objections that are brought against the Cause *and* Truth *we plead for. And let it be considered, that* Church-members *have been commonly distinguished into* Compleat, *and* Incompleat: *And* Authors *who have been* Stars of the first Magnitude, *if ever there have been such upon Earth, have made use thereof. We might instance in that* Incomparable Champion for the Truth, *and for the* Non-Conformists, *against* Prelacy, *Mr.* Robert [r] Parker: *so likewise* [s] Ames, Voetius, [t] Hornbeck, *Dr.* [u] Winter, *Mr.* [w] Hanmer, *&c. make use of the same distinction: and the* Dissenters *have proved it in their* Antisynodalia.

[r] Parker de Pol. Eccles.
[s] Ames. Med. Theol. l. 1. c. 32. Th. 13.
[t] Hornbeck Epist. ad Durœum, p. 356.
[u] Dr. Winter on Act. 2. 38. p. 95.
[w] Mr. Hanmer, Exercit. about Confirmation in Postscr. Second Edit.

Thirdly, it is Objected against us, That we maintain a strange Opinion, namely, That a person who is a Church-member, may become no Member, by an act (or a defect rather, which may be called an act, as Sins of Omission are termed Actual Sins) of his own, without any Church-act in Censuring of him.

Answ. *Most true it is, that we do* Maintain *this, and must do so, till we see the contrary proved. Neither do we know that this* Opinion *contains any thing in it dissentany from Scripture or good Reason: Nor see we how some* Arguments *for the Affirmative can fairly be answered. Suppose we an* English Fugitive *that is become a* Priest *in* Antwerp, *or a* Cardinal *at* Rome: *Or suppose we a* Turk *who is an* English-man *by Birth; this* Turk *was baptized a* Member *of some* Parish-Church (*which those that we dispute against maintain to be* true Churches, *and we are farre from denying of it universally) and he was never* Censured *by any* Church *for his* Apostacy: *now we demand,* Whether this Turk be a Member of the Church of Christ yea or no? *To affirm it, would be grosse; To say that* Turks are Members of the Church of Christ, *is in truth to speak* Daggers. *When the* Arch-Flamin Whitgift *said, that* Papists and Atheists might still remain Members of the visible Church: *Mr.* Parker [x] *tells him,* That even a *Vorstius* would condemn him. *And it is no new Doctrine in the Schools, to say, that* [y] An Heretical Apostate is no more a Member of the Church of Christ, then a Wound, a Sore, or a Brand, is a member of a man; *which none can imagine. The truth of this none can doubt of, that is* mediocriter doctus *in Scholastical Divinity. Therefore we conclude, that* Church-members may become no Members by their own defection.

[x] De Pol Eccles. l. 2. c. 16.
[y] Morton Apol. Cathol. par. 1. l. 1. c. 3.

And

And we humbly conceive (though with ſubmiſſion, as is fit, to better judgements) That thus much is held forth by theſe Scriptures, Hebr. 10. 25. 1 Joh. 2 19. Jude *ver.* 19. *Again, how came* Eſau *to loſe his* Membership? *We reade not that he was* Excommunicate: *Therefore it remains, that he* diſ-Covenanted, *and ſo* diſ-Membered *himſelf. And how came the Children of* Abraham *by* Keturah *to loſe their* Membership? *it was not by* Cenſure. *In like ſort, when perſons* under the Goſpel, *do not come up to the* terms of the Covenant, *to ſhew themſelves to be* Abrahams *Children, by holding forth* his Faith, *and* walking before the Lord in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, *we ſuppoſe that they are juſtly deemed* Breakers of the Covenant, *and have juſtly put themſelves* out of that Covenant which their Parents *(becauſe of their then perſonal incapacity to act for themſelves)* made for them. *Alas! that any ſhould look upon us as* Maintaining dangerous Opinions, *becauſe of this! Wherefore, that all may know, that there is neither* Danger *nor* Singularity *in this our Aſſertion,* That a Church-member may poſſibly become no Member, without any act of the Church in formal Cenſuring of him, *give us leave to produce ſome* Teſtimonies *to prove it. Judicious and bleſſed Dr.* Ames [z] *ſaith,* That in caſe of pertinacious Separation, ſuch perſons, though they may be of the inviſible, yet they are not to be accounted Members of the viſible Church: *Which words of the Learned Doctors do make the more for our purpoſe, for that they are Cited and Approved of by* The [a] Anſwer to the XXXII. Queſtions. *Our* Congregational [b] Brethren *in* England, *do with one voyce ſay,* That ſome Church-members may be *felones de ſe,* ſuch as may deſtroy their own Membership. *Yea, and this was once ſound Doctrine in* New-England. *Bleſſed Mr.* Cotton *(whoſe Name is and will be precious, ſo long as the Earth ſhall endure) maintains it for a Truth,* That [c] many in Churches have cut themſelves off. *Another* Teſtimony *which we would produce, is in* [d] *their* Diſcourſe of the Church-Covenant, *(of which the Reverend Mr.* Richard Mather *was the ſole Author) and the words are theſe following:* [e] That if men had not promiſed, and alſo performed in ſome meaſure of truth, the duties of Faith and Obedience unto God, they had not taken hold of the Covenant, but had *DISCOVENANTED THEM-*

[z] *Caſ. Conſ. l. 5. c. 12. in Reſp. ad Quæſt. 4. Th. 8.*

[a] Anſw. to queſt. 4. p. 17.

[b] Preface to the Declaration of Faith & Order, *at the Savoy.*

[c] Way of Churches, p. 9.

[d] See Preface to the Anſwer to 21 Queſtions.

[e] Diſcourſe of Church-Covenant, *Printed An.* 1639. p. 17.

THEMSELVES, notwithstanding all the Promises of God unto their Fathers or others. Thus though God promised *Abraham* to be a God unto him and his seed, in their generations, *Gen.* 17. 7. yet the *Ishmaelites* and *Edomites* descending from *Abraham*, were discovenanted, by not promising nor performing those duties of Faith and Obedience, which God required on the peoples part. *And the same* Truth *is held forth by the same* Author, *in* The Answer to the XXXII. Questions *before-mentioned. This is the main thing wherein we* Dissent *from the* major part of the Synod. *Now, if this were* Truth *in the Year* 1639. *(as it then had the* Approbation *of the* Elders *hereabouts) we see no reason why it should not be* Truth *in the Year* 1662. *For,* Veritas in omnem partem sui semper eadem est. *Either this was a* Mistake *then, or else it is a* Truth *at this day. Here let us adde the words of Mr.* Cotton, *in his Excellent Treatise of* The Holiness of Church-members, *which are these following:* [f] Such as are Born and Baptized Members of the Church, are not orderly Continued and Confirmed Members, unless when they grow up to years, they do, before the Lord and his People, profess their Repentance and Faith in Jesus Christ. *To say no more of this; Renowned* Parker, *speaking of the Interpretation of those words* [Laying on of Hands] *in* Heb. 6. 2. *cites many judicious Writers, whose judgements he expresseth, in words to this purpose:* [g] That they who were baptized in their minority, when they are grown up, after that the Church had approved their Faith by the Symbol of Imposition of Hands, they were admitted Members of the Church. This was according to sound Doctrine in the Primitive times (*as* Parker *saith.*) *Now we demand, How they can be admitted as Members, who are already as compleat and perfect Members as any in the Church? But the ancient Doctrine was,* ([h] Antiquissimum quia verissimum) That Children who were baptized in their minority, after they shall come to profess their Faith, so as to be accepted of the Church, may be admitted as Members. *Therefore, according to the ancient Doctrine,* Such children are not as compleat and perfect Members as any in the Church. *Yea, therefore it follows, That when they are* Adult, *in case they do not, by holding forth Faith and Repentance, joyn unto*

[f] Mr. Cotton, Holiness of Church-members, p. 19. & 41.

[g] Parker. de P. E. Eccles. in cap. de Unione Ecclesiæ visibili, Sect. 7. & 13.

[h] Tertullian. Adv. Praxean.

the

the Church, that then they do not retain their Membership which they had in minority.

Fourthly, it hath been Objected, That we will not suffer Children to come under the Watch and Care of the Church.

Answ. *We are so farre from being of that* Opinion, *as that we verily fear there is great guilt lies upon the* Churches, *because they have neglected their duty towards the* Children in question. *It is as clear to us as* the Light at Noon, *or (to use* Tertullians *phrase)* as if it were written with the Beams of the Sun, *That a special Care (even* Church-care) *and Inspection is due, over those* Children that are Born within the Gates of Zion. *Happy might it be for us all, if the issue of these troublesome* Controversies *might be onely to* awaken Churches to stricter Watch and Diligence, in Overseeing those Children that are in minority: *Onely we conceive, that the* Watch over them is to be Mediate, *according to the state of their* Membership. *The Church is to see that the* Parents *do their duty toward their Children, in* bringing them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord. [1] And if when they shall be adult, they do not bring forth fruits of Repentance and Faith, then (as the Fig-tree which did not bear fruit, was to be cut down) the Church is to disown them, as *having no part in the Lord,* and to declare, that they by their unbelief have Discovenanted themselves. *But we see not sufficient warrant from the* Word of God, *to proceed to a* formal Excommunication *of the* Children in question, *because that is applicable unto none but those who have been in* full Communion. *Now if this be all that is striven after,* That Church-children might be brought under Church-watch, *why should the* Contentions of Bretbren be like the bars of a Castle, that cannot yield?

[1] Luke 13.7. Acts 8. 21. See Mr. Parker's and Mr. Hooker's Catechism.

Lastly, it hath been Objected, That the reason of our Dissenting from the major part of the Synod, was Weakness and Ignorance, and meer Wilfulness, in that we could bring no Arguments, but what were sufficiently refuted.

Answ. *The very same thing hath been said of those Worthy Champions, who stood up for* the Congregational-Way, *in opposition to the Assembly at* Westminster, *that* [k] Their Arguments were weak and ridiculous, and had been Confuted, and sufficiently answered;

[k] See these words in *The Antidote against Independency* by T. I. P. p. 21, 22.

anſwered, and that themſelves were Self-conceited, and Obſtinate. *But theſe* Criminations *were unworthy* Calumniations. *It was a common Reproach caſt upon the Chriſtians of old,* That they were all weak and unlearned men: *which made* Jerome *write that Book* De viris Illuſtribus. *So* Stapleton *makes no bones to call* Whitaker, An Aſſe, *and* A Fool. *And the ſame* hiſſing of the Serpent *have we ſeen in the* Prelates *againſt the Renowned* Non-Conformiſts. *But, we ſuppoſe, their ſaying ſo, did not prove it was ſo. Nevertheleſs, we are content to accept of the* Charge, *when we are charged with* Weakneſs and Folly: *Let us* be fools for Chriſts ſake, *or* for his Truth; *Let us* fall, *ſo the* Truth may riſe; *let us* ſit in the duſt, *ſo that* Truth may ſit in the Throne. *We deſerve not to be otherwiſe eſteemed, then as* Weakneſs and Ignorance it ſelf: *Yet let us not be reputed* Obſtinate, *and ſuch as are and will be blinde, becauſe we dare not* betray the Truth, and ſin againſt our Conſciences. *For, our* weightieſt Reaſons *never were* Anſwered *unto any tolerable ſatisfaction, even to this day. If it be demanded here,* What our Reaſons were, why we accorded not with the major part of the Synod? *We ſhall by the help of Chriſt, and in the fear of God, declare what our chief* Reaſons *were, which cauſed our* Diſſent; *which when they are* Anſwered, *we ſhall lay down our* Opinion, *as knowing that it is* Nullus pudor ad meliora tranſire.

1. The Synod did acknowledge, That there ought to be true ſaving Faith in the Parent, according to the judgement of rational charity, or elſe the childe ought not to be baptized. *We intreated, and urged again & again,* that this, *which they themſelves acknowledged was a Principle of Truth,* might be ſet down for a Concluſion, and then we ſhould all agree. *But thoſe* Reverend Perſons *againſt whom we placidly diſputed, would not conſent to it is, though* our Unity lay at the Stake for it.

2. We have not Warrant in all the Scripture, to apply the Seal of Baptiſm unto thoſe Children, whoſe Parents are in a ſtate of unfitneſs for the Lords Supper. *Thoſe,* Acts 2. 41. who were Baptized, continued breaking Bread *alſo*, ver. 42. *'Tis granted, That thoſe Children were Circumciſed amongſt the Jews, whoſe Parents were for a time debarred from the Paſſeover,*

but

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[l] *Cate. hareni ad baptiſter uni mique in admittendos juxta* Concil. Araus. c. 19.

[m] Concil. Germ. dist. 4. v. [illegible] p. 222.

[n] *Juell* Reply to *Harding.* P. 553.

[o] *Dav. Chytr. in [illegible]*

[p] *Paul. Oderbor. de relig. Ruſſor.*

[q] *See Bulk. Annot. on Job* 3. 3.

Generation *would be a* true Church of Christ, *without any further Act or Covenanting. But it is* second Generation *are not a* true Church of Christ *without some further Act.* Ergo, *they do not retain their Membership. If they are a* true Church of Christ, *then they have Power to Vote in* Church-affairs, *as to chuse Officers, and to cast out Offenders, and the like; because every* true Church *hath this power given to them by the Lord Jesus, who is the onely* Head of his Church. *But* they have no such Power (*say the Synod, who do expresly* [r] *exclude the persons in question from the Lords Supper and Voting.*) *Therefore we conclude that they are no* true Church of Christ. *Therefore the persons in question do not retain their Membership; therefore their children ought not to be Baptized.*

[r] See the *Answ. to 21 Questions.* And the Synods 4 Propos.

4. It is not Meer Membership, (*as the Synod speaks*) but qualified Membership that gives right unto Baptism. *For the evincing whereof, we argue thus:* John's Baptism *was* Christian Baptism. (*as all our Divines maintain against the Papists*) John's Baptism *might not be applied unto some, who were standing Members of the visible Church, because they were not qualified with* Repentance, Luke 3.8. & 7.30. *Therefore* Christian Baptism *is not to be applied unto such as stand Members in the visible Church, if they be not qualified with* fruits of Repentance. *This seems to us to cut the Sinews of the strongest* Arguments *which are brought by the* Synod *for the* Enlargement of Baptism: *for, their strongest* Argument, *is* the Membership of the Children *in Controversie; whereas it seems to us, that the Scripture doth not acknowledge any such* Meer Membership *as they speak of. And besides that, the case is clear in our apprehension, from the Instance given, That 'tis not* Meer Membership, *but* qualified Membership, *that gives right unto this Divine and Sacred Ordinance.*

5. That which will not make a man capable of receiving Baptism himself, in case he were unbaptized, doth not make him capable of transmitting right of Baptism unto his childe. *It is a Ruled case,* [s] That he that hath not Title himself unto any Priviledge, cannot entitle another. *The Lawyer saith,* Acts [*non habente potestatem*] are invalid. *But all that the Synod have said, will not give a man right to Baptism himself, in case he were unbaptized*

[s] Mr. Hooker, Survey, part. 3. p. 17.

baptized; for a man may be an unbeliever, and yet come up to all that the Synod hath said in their fifth Propoſition, *and more too.* Ergo, *all that the Synod hath ſaid, is not enough to make a man capable of tranſmitting right of Baptiſm unto his childe. The judgement of that famous* Martin Bucer, *alledged and approved by* Parker, *is worthy our conſideration, who maintained, that* [t] None ought to be confirmed Members of the Church, beſides thoſe who do hold forth not onely verbal Profeſſion of Faith, but apparent Signs of Regeneration. *Nay, theſe great Divines ſay, That if there be not* tam neceſſaria ſigna fidei quam publica & ſolennis Profeſſio, *as well* ſuch ſigns and outward appearances of Faith, as ſhall neceſſarily argue (*as farre as men can judge*) that there is truth in the heart, as a publick ſolemn Profeſſion, the Church ought not to accept of the Profeſſions of ſuch perſons, ſo as to confirm them in their Membership. *If the Synod would but have expreſſed as much as this, there had been no* Diſſenting *on our parts. Here alſo we cannot but take notice, that the judgement of that worthy and for-ever famous Mr.* Cotton *was as ours is; for his words are theſe:* [u] I conceive more poſitive fruits of Regeneration are required in the Church-members of the New Teſtament, then of the Old.

[t] *Bucer de regno Chriſti in cap. de Confirmatione. Parker ubi ſupra.*

[u] *Holineſs of Church members, p. 93.*

6. The Application of the Seal of Baptiſm unto thoſe who are not true Believers (*we mean viſibly, for de occultis non judicat Eccleſia*) is a Profanation thereof, and as dreadful a ſin, as if a man ſhould adminiſter the Lords Supper unto unworthy receivers; which is (*as* [w] Calvin *ſaith*) as ſacrilegious impiety, as if a man ſhould take the Blood or Body of Chriſt, and proſtitute it to dogs. *We marvel that any ſhould think, that the Blood of Chriſt is not as much profaned and vilified by* undue Adminiſtration of Baptiſm, *as by* undue Ad[illegible] *ing of* Auſtin's *is ſolemn and ſerious,* [x] Qui indigne accipit Baptiſma, judicium accipit non ſalutem. *He* [illegible] *jeſus, as well as he who* [illegible] *the ſame* Auſtin *in his* [illegible] *for* ſtrictneſs in the Adminiſtration of Baptiſm: [illegible] *and* Tertullian *before him.*

[w] *Inſtit. l. 4. c. 15*

[x] *Auguſt. contra Epiſtol. c. 6.*

[y] [illegible] *of ord. p.* 809

7. It

answered, and that themselves were Self-conceited, and Obstinate. *But these* Criminations *were unworthy* Calumniations. *It was a common Reproach cast upon the Christians of old,* That they were all weak and unlearned men: *which made* Jerome *write that Book* De viris Illustribus. *So* Stapleton *makes no bones to call* Whitaker, An Asse, *and* A Fool. *And the same* hissing of the Serpent *have we seen in the* Prelates *against the Renowned* Non-Conformists. *But, we suppose, their saying so, did not prove it was so. Nevertheless, we are content to accept of the* Charge, *when we are charged with* Weakness and Folly: *Let us* be fools for Christs sake, *or* for his Truth; *Let us* fall, *so the* Truth may rise; *let us* sit in the dust, *so that* Truth may sit in the Throne. *We deserve not to be otherwise esteemed, then as* Weakness and Ignorance it self: *Yet let us not be reputed* Obstinate, *and such as are and will be blinde, because we dare not* betray the Truth, and sin against our Consciences. *For, our* weightiest Reasons *never were* Answered *unto any tolerable satisfaction, even to this day. If it be demanded here,* What our Reasons were, why we accorded not with the major part of the Synod? *We shall by the help of Christ, and in the fear of God, declare what our chief* Reasons *were, which caused our* Dissent; *which when they are* Answered, *we shall lay down our* Opinion, *as knowing that it is* Nullus pudor ad meliora transire.

1. The Synod did acknowledge, That there ought to be true saving Faith in the Parent, according to the judgement of rational charity, or else the childe ought not to be baptized. *We intreated, and urged again & again,* that this, *which they themselves acknowledged was a Principle of Truth,* might be set down for a Conclusion, and then we should all agree. *But those* Reverend Persons *against whom we placidly disputed, would not consent to this, though* our Unity lay at the Stake for it.

2. We have not Warrant in all the Scripture, to apply the Seal of Baptism unto those Children, whose Parents are in a state of unfitness for the Lords Supper. *Those,* Acts 2. 41. who were Baptized, continued breaking Bread *also,* ver. 42. *'Tis granted, That those Children were Circumcised amongst the Jews, whose Parents were for a time debarred from the Passeover, but*

but that was only upon accident of Ceremonial Uncleanneſs, *which alters not the caſe; for,* Unleſs the father were in a ſtate of fitneſs for the Paſſeover, he was not fit to have his childe circumciſed. *The like may be ſaid concerning the* Goſpel-Paſſeover, *and the* Goſpel-Circumciſion. *Neither do we reade, that in the Primitive times* Baptiſm *was of a greater latitude, as to the* Subject *thereof, then the* Lords Supper: *but the contrary. The* [l] Catechumeni *were not to be Baptized, before they were fit for the* Lords Supper. *And thence, when through the darkneſs of the times, the* Lords Supper *was not adminiſtred except at* Eaſter, (*as 'tis called*) *the* [m] Baptiſm of the Catechumeni *was deferred until then alſo. In the* Dawnings of Reformation *in* England, *our* Juell *could plead againſt* Harding, *that* [n] Baptiſm was as much to be reverenced, as the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Chriſt. *Nay, in former Ages, ſome Churches have been ſo far from extending Baptiſm, further then the Lords Supper, as that they have committed a grievous Errour, in adminiſtring the Lords Supper unto* Infants. *So it hath been in the Churches of* [o] Bohemia, *and in* [p] Ruſſia: *And this was maintained by* Auſtin, *and* Innocentius, *and* [q] *all the Churches in their time. Which* Teſtimonies *we produce, to ſhew, that former Ages have been farre from looking upon the* Lords Supper, *as being of a more ſacred nature then the other Ordinance of* Baptiſm. *Indeed of late there have been thoſe who have made* Baptiſm *of a far larger extent then the* Lords Supper. *This hath been one* practical Difference *between* Congregational-men *and* Presbyterians (*whom the Lord unite in the Truth*) *in that the* Congregational-men *would baptize the Children of none but ſuch, whoſe Parents were fit for the* Lords Supper: *when-as the* Presbyterians *would Baptize the Children of ſuch, whoſe Parents were not fit for the* Lords Supper; *and their promiſcuous Adminiſtration of that* Ordinance, *was very grievous unto their* Congregational Brethren. *See* Beverly *againſt* Timſon.

[l] *Catechumeni ad Baptiſterium nunquam admittendi ſunt.* Concil. Arauſ. c. 19.

[m] Concil. Gern. dist. 4.

[n] *Juels* Reply to *Harding.* P. 553.

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[t] *Bucer de regno Christi, in cap. de Confirmatione.* Parker *ubi supra.*

[u] *Holiness of Church-members, p. 93.*

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[w] *Instit. l. 4. c. 15.*

[x] *August. ex Fulgent. c. 6.*

7. It

7. It hath in it a natural tendency to the hardening of unregenerate creatures in their sinful natural condition, when Life is not onely Promised, but Sealed to them by the precious Blood of Jesus Christ. [y] Baptism is a Seal of the whole Covenant of Grace, as well as the Lords Supper; and therefore those that are not interested in this Covenant by Faith, ought not to have the Seal thereof applied to them. *Thus have we given an Account of the principal* Reasons *which caused our* Dissent from the major part of the Reverend Assembly. *We might adde to all this,* That there is danger of great Corruption and Pollution creeping into the Churches, by the Enlargement of the Subject of Baptism. *They are the words of a good man, and faithful Minister of the Gospel now in* Europe, *in a Letter sent unto one in* America: I hope (*saith he*) some in *New-England* will with clear light stand up against the Enlarging of Baptism to any, but those whose Parents are admitted unto the Lords Supper. If ever it be passant Doctrine in the Churches, that others have a right to it, Farewell to *New-England*'s Peculiar Glory of undefiled Administrations of holy things. These things are Discouragements with me, from hastening to *New-England*. *Thus he. It may be some will think that we do* (*as it is in the Adage*) Nodum in scirpo quærere, *make scruples to our selves, and fear where there is no fear: Well it will be for us, and for the Churches, if in the end it prove so.*

Now the Lord grant, that his People may have one heart and one way (*and that it may be the* right way, *even the* way which is called Holy) to serve him, for the good of them, and of their Children after them. *And the God of* Truth *and* Peace, *lead us by his Spirit into* all Truth, *through him who is made unto us of God,* the Way, and the Truth, and the Life.

Increase Mather

[y] *Baptismus totum fœdus gratiæ obsignat fidelibus.* Amesius Med. l. 1. c. 40. Thes. 6.

CERTAIN

James Foster [1] for Book 164

CERTAIN POSITIONS

Out of the

HOLY SCRIPTURES,

Premiſed to the whole enſuing

DISCOURSE.

WEE may fitly begin this Diſcourſe, with what the Reverend Elders ſay (in their Preface to their Printed Book) That the Prayer of *Epaphras* for the *Coloſſians*, ought to be the Prayer and Labour of us all, viz. *That we may ſtand perfect and compleat in all the will of God.* And it is a good Profeſſion which they make, ſaying, *We truſt it is our ſincere deſire, that it is will, all his will, and nothing but his will may be done among us. To the Law and to the Teſtimony we do wholly referre our ſelves; and if any thing in the following Concluſions be indeed found not to ſpeak according thereunto, let it be rejected.* This doth encourage me to joyn with them, in ſeeking the right path in this unfrequented way, ſo far as the Glory of Gods Holineſs and Grace, together with the honour of his Truth, may be manifeſted to be dearer to us then all Creature-concernments and Self-reſpects. In order whereunto, I conceive our principal inquiry ſhould be, what thoſe more general Principles of Truth are, which lie in the things controverted, and how they may be rightly applied: uſing herein onely ſuch Light as the Scripture affordeth, by comparing one Text with another, and depending on God in Chriſt for ſupply and aſſiſtance of the Spirit of Truth to lead us into theſe Principles, and to teach us by them; that thereby we may be brought to an univerſal harmony

of Truth; all the Lines of Truth (however ſeparated in the Circumference) meeting together in theſe Principles, as in their Centre, and becoming one Point. The finding out of ſuch Principles, and rightly applying them, would make the way to Truth ſhorter, the myſtery of Truth clearer, and the united force of Truth ſtronger againſt Errour, a ſweeter cloſing of Spirits among good men, and the examining of other mens Opinions eaſier, then walking after the larger Circumference of the voluminous Writings of men, which lead us further from theſe Principles, then the Scripture alone. This is that which I would attain, and am preſſing after, as in other Controverſies, ſo in theſe Queſtions. For clearing the truth wherein, I ſhall firſt propound certain *Theſes*, or *Poſitions*: Secondly apply them, in a way of *Replying* to their *Propoſitions*.

1. The *Theſes* or *Poſitions* propounded ſhall be theſe following, and the like.

1. *Poſition.* The whole Scripture, *breathed of God*, holdeth forth a perfect Rule, as of Righteouſneſs toward men, ſo, of Holineſs toward God, in all things that concern his Natural and Inſtituted Worſhip, *that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furniſhed unto all good works*, 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17.

2. *Poſition.* Jeſus Chriſt, *the Apoſtle and High Prieſt of our Profeſſion*, is to be conſidered, by all *holy Brethren*, *partakers of the heavenly calling*, as not inferiour in his Office to *Moſes*: For, as the Office of *Moſes* reached to all the Houſe of God, and all the Service of it under the Law; ſo Chriſts Office reacheth to all the Church of God, and all the Service of it under the Goſpel. 2. And whatſoever Chriſt did inſtitute or abrogate in the Chriſtian Churches, he did it by Gods appointment; as *Moſes*, by Gods appointment, gave out what he delivered in the Church of *Iſrael*. 3. And Chriſt is no leſs faithful therein, then *Moſes* was, *Heb.* 3. 2, 3. So that it is as unlawful for men to alter the Ordinances of Chriſt given to Chriſtian Churches, under the Goſpel, or to adde thereunto, or to diminiſh ought therefrom, as it was under the Law, *Deut.* 12. 32. *Mat.* 28. 20.

3. *Poſition.* Chriſt is not rightly conſidered, nor duely eſteemed, except he be preferred as far above *Moſes*, as the Father hath counted him worthy

worthy of more Glory then *Moses*; and as far above the whole Church, as the Builder is above the House in honour and authority. Mens authority being but Ministerial, as Servants, who are to act onely by direction and appointment; Christs authority being Magisterial and Despotical, which Prerogative he hath as he is Son of the Eternal Father by eternal generation. Hence the Church is Christ's own House, and he alone may dispose of it, and of the Service thereof, as it pleaseth him, by altering the Mosaical Levitical Ordinances, and appointing a more Spiritual and simple way of Worship in place thereof, *Hebr.* 3.3, *to* 7. *Joh.* 4.23 24. 2 *Cor.* 11.2,3.

The Ordinances of God given by *Moses* for the Service of God under the first Tabernacle, were imposed on the Jews, *until the time of Reformation* at the coming of Christ, who being come as the true *Melchisedec*, changed the Levitical Ordinances into other more suitable to his Royal Priesthood. *Heb.* 9.9,10. *For, the Priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change of the Law*, Heb. 7.12. And, having taken away that *unsupportable Yoke*, calleth Believers under the Gospel to take his *easie and sweet Yoke upon them*, Acts 15.10. Mat. 11.29. 4 *Position.*

Though the Covenant of *Abraham* was the same in substance to believing Jews under the Law, and to Believers, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, under the Gospel, *Rom.* 4.11, 12. And, though the Kingdome of God be the same in substance, which is taken from the unbelieving *Jews*, and given to the believing *Gentiles*, *Matth.* 21.43. yet the administration of the Covenant and Kingdome is not the same, in all ages, but varied according to the different times, wherein the Church hath been gathered; the progress thereof, in that variety, being from less perfect, before the coming of Christ, to more perfect, after his coming: the former was more external and carnal, *Heb.* 9.10. the latter more internal and spiritual, *Joh.* 1.17. that was accommodated to the state of the Church being *a childe*; this to the state of the Church being *an heir grown to full age*, Gal. 4.1, *to* 5. 5 *Position.*

Though Baptism is come in the place of Circumcision, and therefore infants of Confederates are now to be baptized, as then they were to be circumcised, they both being outward Seals of 6 *Position.*

the ſame Covenant in ſubſtance, *Col.*2. 11,12. *Rom.*4.11. Yet, neither muſt we look at Circumciſion as it was of *Moſes*, but of the Fathers, *Ib.*7.22 nor at every ſubject of Circumciſion, as the ſubject of Baptiſm extenſively. Circumciſion was extended to all that were born in the houſe, and bought with money, *Gen.*17 12,13. But Baptiſm is limited to believing Iews and their children, and to ſo many as the Lord our God ſhall call, *Acts* 2. 38,39. 1 *Cor.*7.14. *Your children are holy*; he ſaith not, Your ſervants, *&c.*

7 *Poſition.* The Rules accommodated, by Ieſus Chriſt our Lord, for the manner of applying the Covenant, and of adminiſtring the Kingdome of God, under the Goſpel, concern either the conſtitution, and ordering of Chriſtian Churches; or the propagation and continuing of them; or their communion together. In all which, both the Truth, and the Arguments for confirmation of it, muſt be drawn expreſly, or by good conſequence, from the New Teſtament, in ſuch particulars wherein we have Chriſt's appointment, or the Primitive Churches, planted or approved by the Apoſtles, for our Patterns. Not from the Old Teſtament, further then they may be inferred thence by parity of reaſon, *Mat.*28.20. 1 *Tim.*3.14,15.

8 *Poſition.* The Rules given of Chriſt, 1. Concerning *The Conſtitution of Chriſtian Churches*, are 1. That the Matter of them muſt be, if adult, approved Believers, *Acts* 5.14. if infants, or children in minority, ſuch whoſe Parents (both or one) are orderly, and viſibly joyned to the Church of Chriſt, *Acts* 2.39. 1 *Cor.*7.14. 2. That the Form of them, muſt be their viſible confederating with the Lord Chriſt, as the Head of the Church, and one with another mutually, to walk together according to his Rules, for the attainment of the ends of Church-communion, 2 *Cor.*8.5. 1 *Pet.*2.5.

9 *Poſition.* The Rules given by Chriſt for *The Ordering of Chriſtian Churches*, are, 1. In general; that all Goſpel-Ordinances be diſpenſed and adminiſtred according to Goſpel-Precepts and Patterns, *Col.*2.5,6. 2. In particular; 1. That fit perſons be orderly admitted into this holy Fellowſhip, *by the Door*, which is Chriſt believed on and profeſſed, *Joh.*10.7,9. 2. That Officers appointed

pointed by Christ be regularly chosen and ordained, and that the Elders, both Teaching and Ruling, especially Teaching, be singularly loved, and honoured with *double honour*, and obeyed, 1 *Tim.* 3. *Tit.* 1 *Thl.* 1. 1. *Acts* 6. 6. & 14. 23. 1 *Thess.* 5. 12, 13. 1 *Tim.* 4. 17, 18. *Heb.* 13. 17. 2. That the Members exercise mutual Watchfulness one over another, *Heb.* 10. 24, 25. with mutual Submission of one to another, and of every one to the whole Body, 1 *Pet.* 5. 5. 3. That the visible Seals, instituted by Christ for Gospel-Churches, which are onely two, *Baptism*, and the *Lords Supper*, 1 *Cor.* 12. 13. be administred by the Teaching Officers, according to Christs Institution, *Mat.* 28. 19. 1. *Baptism* is to be administred by Christs Ordinance to Disciples, *ibid.* *Viz.* 1. To grown persons not before baptized, after their holding forth their Repentance and Faith in Christ, and voluntary taking hold of the Covenant for themselves and their seed, *Mat.* 3. 6. *Luke* 3. 3. *Acts* 8 37, 38. & 2. 38, 39. 1 *Cor.* 12. 12, 13. These, for distinction sake, I call *Immediate Members*. 2. To their infant-seed or children in minority, who also are members in the right of their Parents covenanting for them, *Acts* 2. 39. 1 *Cor.* 7. 14. these I call *Mediate Members*; because the membership which they have is *Mediante Parentum fœdere*: therefore, these being grown up, must be admitted into immediate fellowship, and full communion with the Church, by their personal faith held forth to satisfaction of the Churches charitable discretion, and by their taking hold of the Covenant for themselves and their seed, as their Parents before them did; as it is propheſied of Gospel-Churches in *Isa.* 56. 6, 7. & 62 5. 2. The *Lords Supper* is to be administred according to Christ's Institution, in reference both to the Ordinance it self, 1 *Cor.* 11. 23, *to* 27. and to the Communicants, *ver.* 27 *to* 32. 4. That Church-censures be applied to delinquent Members, in private offences, according to *Mat.* 18 15 *to* 18. and in publick criminous Scandals, according to 1 *Cor.* 5. 11. *Rev.* 22. 15. but so as the publick judgement be, not by the Elders alone, but, together with them, by the Fraternity, 1 *Cor* 5 12.

The Rules given of Christ, *for the Propagation and Continuing of Christian Churches*, are properly suited to their Congregational 10 *Position.*

and Spiritual ſtate. They are not the ſame with thoſe before the Law, when the Church was onely in Families, nor with thoſe under the Law given to the Church of the Jews: in both which the Church was to be propagated, and continued by natural generation, in a lineal deſcent, from *Noah*, by *Shem*; and from *Abraham*, by *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, till the coming of Chriſt; this way beſt ſuiting to a Domeſtical and National Church, in their reſpective conſtitutions. Chriſtian Churches are of neither of theſe ſorts, but are, by Chriſt's appointment, caſt into a Congregational, and more Spiritual Form; and therefore, are not capable of being propagated and continued, in a lineal ſucceſſion, by natural generation, ordinarily: but muſt be propagated and continued 1. In adult perſons, by Regeneration viſibly manifeſted to the charitable diſcretion of the Church, *Joh.* 3. 3,5. being wrought in the working of Faith in Chriſt, *Joh.*1.12,13. and made viſible, by a right confeſſion and profeſſion of Faith, both *quæ creditur*, Rom.10.10. and *quâ creditur*, Gal.3.26. 2. In their infant-ſeed, by their Parents covenanting for them; to the end, that ſuch, being engaged to God in their infancy, may be thereby engaged and excited the more to give up themſelves to God in Chriſt, when they come to years of diſcretion, *not by conſtraint, but willingly*, Pſal.110.3. through *the operation of God* working Faith in their hearts, *Col.*2.12. by the Spirit, who is a voluntary Agent, and therefore likened *to the wind which bloweth where it liſteth*, Joh.3.8. Sometimes in ſome of the next poſterity, yet not in all, 2 *Joh.*4. ſometimes in the Grandmother, and Mother, and Childe; as in *Timothy*, 2 *Tim.*1.5. Accordingly the Church muſt make a difference of Children grown up, where God makes a difference, as he did between *Jacob* and *Eſau*, *Mal.*1.2. and receive onely ſuch whom Chriſt receiveth, *Rom.*14.1,7.

1 *Poſition.* The Rules given of Chriſt, *Concerning the Communion of Chriſtian Churches*, are, 1. Concerning the Ground of it; which is their Spiritual Union under one Head, Chriſt, *Eph.*1.22,23. in one Body, one Spirit, one Hope of their calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptiſm, one God and Father of all, and they muſt *endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*, Eph.4. 3,4,5,6. As they have one *common Faith*, Tit.1.4. ſo they muſt

contend

contend earneſtly for the faith once given to the Saints, Jude, *ver.* 3. They have alſo *one* and the ſame *Rule*, Gal. 6 16. *The ſame Officers*, in all Churches, *Tit.* 1. 5. *The ſame Ordinances and Decrees*, 1 *Cor.* 7 17. & 16. 1. *Acts* 16. 4. *The ſame Order*, Col. 2. 5. *The ſame Doctrine*, 1 *Cor.* 4. 17. & 15. 11. *Gal.* 1. 7. which all the Churches muſt *hold faſt*, Rev. 3. 3. and renounce all other Doctrines, *Gal.* 1. 8, 9. 1 *Tim.* 1. 3. & 6. 3. 14.

2. Concerning the Manner of it; for, as the Church generally conſidered, is *the Mother of all the faithful*, Gal 4. 26. ſo particular Churches are *Siſters* each to other, *Cant.* 8. 8. and there is *a Brotherhood* of viſible Saints throughout the World, 1 *Pet.* 5. 9. Hence the manner of their communion muſt be *ſocial*, as between equals, none exerciſing juriſdiction and authority over another. *Par in parem, non habet imperium.* The giving of Laws to the Churches is *Chriſts* Prerogative, *Jam.* 4. 12. who hath alſo committed the Keyes of the Kingdome of Heaven to each particular inſtituted Church, to be exerciſed by each Church within it ſelf, without dependance upon the Authority of other Churches *in re propriâ*, *Mat.* 16. 19. 1 *Cor.* 5. 12.

3. Concerning the Things, wherein this communion muſt be exerciſed, 1. In general; in mutual Helpfulneſs, according to God, by mutual care one of, and for another, 1 *Cor.* 10. 24. *Phil.* 2. 20 21. 2. Particularly, 1. By Spiritual Helpfulneſs, and care exerciſed

1. In mutual Prayer, and endeavours for their edification, *Cant.* 8. 8, 9. 1 *Cor.* 12 7. 1 *Pet.* 4. 10, 11. and for their confirmation and eſtabliſhment in the truth, *Acts* 15. 41. & 16. 4, 5. and for ſtrengthning each other in the regular application of Church-cenſures to their delinquent Members, 2 *Theſſ.* 3. 14. 2 *Tim.* 4. 15.

2. By outward Supplies unto their Neceſſities, *Acts* 11. 29. *Rom.* 15. 26, 27. 2 *Cor.* 8. 2, &c. throughout that *Chapter*.

3. By their mutual care to avoid Offences, 1 *Cor.* 10. 32.

4. That, when a Church findeth need (in reſpect of want of light, or of competent conſent within it ſelf) it is their duty to ſeek help by the counſel of ſome other Church or Churches, and the other Church or Churches ought to give it, in a brotherly way,

way, from the Word of God, not by the Elders apart, but in the presence, and with concurrence of the Brethren, *Acts* 15. 4,22, 23. nor may they bind such a Church to rest in their determination, further then the same shall be found, upon searching the Scriptures, to *seem good to the Holy Ghost*, as well as to them, *Acts* 15.28. or, if Neighbour-Churches finde it necessary, to offer their helpfulness to a Church, in case of the Officers Maleadministration, or of Errours, and Scandals, and Schisms, and the like cases, to prevent the infection of themselves, or to remove corruption from such a Church, which, being obstinate in their way, seeketh not for help, the Neighbour-Churches ought to exercise the Communion of Churches, by enquiring to finde out the truth, and by admonishing the offending Church, in a brotherly way; whereunto that Church ought to submit according to God, *Rom.*16.17 *Gal.*2.11--14. And, if it obstinately persisteth in *scandalous Evils*, after convincing light held forth, the offended Churches may renounce communion with them, to avoid fellowship in their sin, *Eph.* 5.11 1 *Tim.*5.22.

12 *Position.* The Rules given by *Christ to Christian Churches*, in the *Premisses*, and the like, are to be Received by all the Churches, and the Members of them, and to be obeyed, as his Laws and Commandments, who is our *one Law-giver*. In observing whereof, and not otherwise, the *Purity and Peace of Christian Churches will be preserved, by the blessing of Christ*, *Iam.* 4.12. *Mat.*28.20. 1 *Cor.*14.37. 1 *Tim.*6 13. *Gal.*6:16.

These, and the like, being *general Principles of Truth*, the particular *Determinations of the Synod*, in the *Two Questions*, are to be Examined by them; and so far, and no further, to be Approved and Received, as a consent and harmony of them with these, may be cleared to the consciences of men rightly informed which may be manifested by a right application, and comparing them together.

2. The Application of the former *Theses* or *Positions* to the *Questions* and *Answers*, as they are stated and expressed by the Reverend Elders, in their Printed Book, followeth.

The

The first Question propounded to them by the Honoured General Court, was,

"Quest. 1. *Who are the Subjects of Baptism?*

"Answ. *The Answer may be given in the following Propositions.* Which are seven in number.

"Propos. 1 *They that according to Scripture, are Members of* "*the visible Church, are the Subjects of Baptism.*

"Propos. 2. *The Members of the visible Church, according to* "*Scripture, are Confederate visible Believers, in particular* "*Churches, and their infant-seed, i. e. children in minority,* "*whose next Parents, one or both, are in Covenant.*

Reply. I cannot approve the two first Propositions, without some change of the terms. In the first, thus; they that, according to Christ's Ordinance, *are regular, and actual Members*, &c. The second, thus; *The actual and regular Members of the visible Church, according to Christs Ordinance, are*, &c. The necessity of this alteration will appear, if, either the premised Positions be duely considered, wherewith these Propositions will not otherwise agree; or, if the Proofs alledged by them from Scripture for confirmation of these two Propositions, be duely examined; or, if what is hereafter to be Replied unto the following Propositions, shall be duely weighed.

"Propos. 3. *The infant-seed of confederate visible believers, are* "*Members of the same Church with their Parents, and when* "*grown up, are personally under the Watch, Discipline and Go-* "*vernment of the Church.*

This Proposition consisteth of two parts, both which they endeavour to prove distinctly.

"1 *That they are Members of the same Church with their Pa-* "*rents*] This may pass in a right sense, being understood of *Mediate Members*, in and by their Parents covenanting for them, in their infancy, or minority. I shall not oppose it.

"2 *That when they are growen up, they are personally under the* "*Watch, Discipline and Government of the Church*] This expression call for serious consideration, and the Proofs of it require due examination. 1. For the Expression the meaning of it seems to be this; That when the children, that were baptized in their

minority, are grown up to years of discretion, or become men, they are Members, (or, as they speak afterward, *more Members*) and by that membership, are under the Watch, Discipline, and Government of the Church. But what membership is this? Their membership, in their minority, was *mediate*, in and by their Parents covenanting for them, as themselves say in *pag.* 14. and answerably, they are under the Watch of the Church in and by their Parents, who are immediately, and personally under the Watch, Discipline and Government of the Church, which is to see that the Parents do their duty, and perform their Covenant for them, in *bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, *Eph.*6.4. and to help them therein.

But by what right are they personally under the Watch, Discipline, and Government of the Church? Not by their Parents Covenant: for that was theirs onely in their infancy, and minority; because then they were not capable of covenanting for themselves personally. It remains then, that, when grown up, they must be, either not members of the Church personally, or members by their personal covenanting for themselves and theirs, as other adult persons must be, who offer themselves to Church-fellowship: Else, though they were members of the same Church with their Parents, in their infancy, and minority; yet they continue not members, when grown up, nor are personally under the Watch, Discipline, and Government of the Church, by their own fault. But they say the contrary is manifest. Therefore let us examine their Arguments.

"Arg. 1. *Children were under Patriarchal and Mosaical Discipline of old*, Gen.18.19. & 21.9,10,12. Gal.5.3. *and therefore under Congregational Discipline now.*

Reply 1. The Texts alledged do not prove the Antecedent. 1. *Abrahams* commanding his Children and household after him, to *keep the way of the Lord*, &c. doth not necessarily infer Church-discipline: It being enjoyned to all Fathers of Families, in the National Church of *Israel*, *Deut.*6.7. & 11.19. and in the Congregational Churches of Christ, under the Gospel, *Eph.*6. 4,9. within their own Families, where they have not power to exercise Church-discipline: or, if any further thing was meant,

it

it may be applied to the command concerning Circumcision, as *Gen.*17 26,27. 2. That in *Gen.*21 9. where *Ishmael*, who was born after the flesh, persecuted *Isaac* who was born after the Spirit, and was therefore cast out of the Church, in *Abrahams* Family, is improved by the Apostle to another purpose, in *Gal.*4. 22---29 nor doth it prove their Proposition. For *Ishmael* was not circumcised at *eight dayes old*, but when he was *thirteen years old*: and therefore may be thought to be circumcised upon his *personal taking hold of the Covenant*, as other grown persons in the family did, there being nothing said in that story to evince the contrary. To which opinion *Polycarpus Lyserus* seemeth to incline. If it was so, then there is a manifest difference between *Ishmael* case, and the children of confederates, baptized in infancy: for *Ishmael* was admitted into Church-fellowship and full communion, by his personal covenanting, whereupon he was circumcised. being grown up to years of discretion, and so might be regularly excommunicated, which they who never were in full communion may not be. 2. To prove that children were under *Mosaical discipline of old*, they produce onely one text, *Gal.*5.3. where the Apostle speaking of circumcision, (not as it was given of God, and rightly used by *Abraham*, *as a seal of the righteousness which is by faith*, Rom 4.11. but as it was abused by false Teachers, to establish justification by the works of the Law) *testifieth to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole Law, and that therefore Christ shall profit them nothing.* Because he that seeketh Righteousness in Circumcision, is bound, by like reason, to seek it in other works of the Law. Therefore this text doth not prove that for which it is alledged, *viz.* that Children circumcised in infancy, were, being grown up, under the external Mosaical Watch, Discipline, and Government of the Church.

Reply 2. Their Argument also is to be denied: Because, if the Antecedent were more manifestly true then it is found to be; yet the Consequent is not good. For there is not *par ratio*, the like reason of those Patriarchal, and Mosaical Churches, and Congregational Churches under the Gospel. The members of the Church, in the *Patriarchs family*, were to continue in com-

munion with the Church, from their being circumcised all the dayes of their life, until they were cast out, as persecuting *Ishmael* was, or voluntarily departed from it, as prophane *Esau* did, together with his posterity; which was ordered by Gods special Providence to separate the *Ishmaelites* and *Edomites* from *the Israelites, of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came*, Rom. 9. 5. As for the Church of *Israel*, under *Moses*, 1. We do not reade of any Ordinance given them for casting out their members for sins against the Moral Law; as we finde it to be commanded and practised under the Gospel, 1 Cor. 5 4,5 11. 2. The grown members of the Church of *Israel*, under *Moses*, were brought under such Discipline, as was established in that Church, by a solemn Covenant, whereof all adult persons were, by Gods Ordinance, to take hold *personally*, and to have full communion with that Church in all Legal Ordinances, *Deut.* 26. 16,17,18. But we have no such Ordinance, under the Gospel, whereby the grown children of Christian Churches are members in full communion or, as *meer members*, brought under Church-discipline, and Government, in Congregational Churches.

" Arg. 2. *They are within the Church, or Members thereof:* " *and therefore subject to Church-judicature*, 1 Cor. 5 12.

Reply. The Argument is to be denied, in their sense; nor doth the text prove it: for that text speaketh of men that are members in full communion. Such an one was that *incestuous Corinthian*, till he was taken away from among them by Excommunication, 1 Cor. 5. 1,2,5. and such were they who were afterward spoken of in *ver.* 11. who were called *Brethren*, in respect of their full communion with the Church, before they were put, by the just censure of the Church, into that state, wherein the members are *forbidden to eat with him*. And of that Church-judicature he speaks in *ver.* 12. saying, *Do not ye judge them that are within?* i. e. in full membership, as well of all other Ordinances, as of Censures. And indeed, seeing Excommunication is the casting out from communion; How can any be formally excommunicated, who were never in communion and so within the Church? Now themselves deny such communion to the *adult persons*, whom they call *meer members*, to distinguish them from

members.

members in full communion: therefore not subject to Judicature of the Church, according to the meaning of that text.

" Arg. 3 *They are Disciples, and therefore under Discipline in* " *Christs School*, Mat 28.19.20.

Reply. Though all Church-members are Disciples; infants, *fœderall*, in and by their Parents covenanting for them; and adult persons, *personally*, by their covenanting for themselves, and therefore both are under the Discipline of the Church suitably to their membership: the first, in and under their Parents; the second, in and by themselves, being in full communion with the Church; Yet I do not finde *any where in Scripture*, that such adult persons as they call *their Members*, are styled *Disciple*, or accounted *Members*. The adult persons in *Mat.* 28.20. must *observe and do all Christ commandments*; therefore the Disciples there intended, with reference to adult persons, are members in full communion.

" Arg 4. *They are in Church-covenant; therefore subject to* " *Church-power*, Gen. 17.7. *with* 18.19.

Reply. They are not in covenant *de facto*, being adult, and not admitted into Church-communion, in all the Ordinances; therefore are not subject to Church power. That text in *Gen.* 17.7. hath respect especially to *Isaac*, *ver.* 19. for in *Isaac* was *Abrahams* seed to be called, *Gen.* 21.12. *So the children of the flesh are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are accounted for the seed*, Rom. 9.8. and, *The Gentiles are adopted through faith in Christ*. Gal. 3.26. for it is in Christ (either apprehended by personal faith, as in adult persons, or comprehending children in their Parents Covenant) that the Covenant is *everlasting*, and so to be perpetually continued in the substance of it; though by mutable signs. *Jus.* The Covenant of Grace is eternal, though it was to be visibly sealed by circumcision, till the coming of Christ, and after the coming of Christ by Baptism perpetually unto the end of the World. There is no difference between us, concerning the infant-seed, but onely concerning adult persons, who are, by age in a capacity of covenanting for themselves and theirs. Let these approve their faith in Christ, to the charitable discretion of the Church, and so be received into Co-

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venant, and Church-communion personally; and then, and not otherwise they are regularly subject to Church-power. Their second proof from *Gen* 18. 19. hath been spoken to before, when I examined their *first Argument* for this *third Proposition*.

" Arg. 5. *They are Subjects of the Kingdome of Christ; and* " *therefore under the Laws and Government of his Kingdome*, Ezek. " 37.25 26

Reply. This Argument may justly be retorted against themselves, and the Proof of it. For, th Subjects of Christs Kingdome there meant, are voluntary Subjects, according to that Prophesie in *Psal*. 110 3. and such Subjects have full communion in all priviledges of Christs Kingdome, and so under the Government of it But they deny that the *meer Members*, of whom they speak, have communion in all the priviledges of Christs Kingdome. Therefore, they are not under the Laws and Government of it, and by Consequence they are not Subjects of it.

" Arg. 7. *Baptism leaves the baptized (of which number these chil-* " *dren are) in a state of subjection to the authoritative teaching of Christs* " *Ministers, and to the observation of all his commandments*, Mat. 28. " 19,20 *and therefore in a state of subjection unto Discipline.*

Ans. This is not another Argument, but the same with the third Argument, though clothed with other words. Therefore the same Answer may serve for this also.

" Arg. 7. *Elders are charged to take heed unto, and to feed* (i. e. " *both to Teach and Rule, compare* Ezek 34.3 4.) *all the Flock,* " *or Church, over which the Holy Ghost hath made them Overseers,* " Acts 20.28. *That children are a part of the Flock, was proved* " *before: and so Paul accounts them, writing to the same Flock, or* " *Church of* Ephesus, *Ep*. 6. 1.

Reply. Be it so that children are part of the Flock which is all that I finde before proved and that Elders are charged to take heed, and to feed (i. e. both *Teach* and *Rule*) all the Flock suitably, to their different capacities; yet all this concerneth not such grown persons to whom they deny full Church-communion For they that are of competent age and understanding, must be orderly joyned

joyned to the Church, by holding forth their calling and faith in Christ to the satisfaction of the Church, according to the Rule, and so to be received into fellowship of the Covenant and Communion, by their personal right, without which they are not to be accounted of the Flock or Church. Nor did *Paul* so account such. But those children noted in *Eph.* 6 1 were either in their minority and so he puts in their duty in that Epistle as part of their Catechetical instruction; or, if they were adult they were personally joyned to the Church in communion, and so were under the teaching and discipline of the Church.

"Arg. 8. *Otherwise Irreligion and Apostacy would inevitably* "*break into Churches, and no way left by Christ to prevent or heal* "*the same, which would also bring many Church-members under* "*that dreadful judgement of being let alone in their wickedness,* "Hos. 4 16, 17.

Resp. 1. There is no cause of fear that Irreligion and Apostacy will break into Churches, if the *Porter* look well unto the *Doors of the Lords House*, that no adult persons be received into *personal Membership*, but such as regularly approve their *personal fitness* for all Church-communion. Or, if such evils break into the Church, through the hypocrisie of such as *creep in unawares*, *Jude*, ve. 4. yet then Christ hath left a clear and plain way to prevent and heal the same, by *subjecting such under the Watch, and Discipline, and Government of the Church*. But the admitting of such adult persons, as are not qualified for Church communion in all Ordinances, will be found, in the issue, the cause of the breaking in of Irreligion and Apostacy into Churches, by the fault of men, who *gather without Christ*, and *receive such as he rejecteth*. Nor will the Churches censuring of such, prevent or heal those evils, seeing he blesseth onely his own Institutions, not mens Devices. Humane Inventions usually cause the Evils which they pretend to cure; as we see in the *Love-feasts*, which brake love among the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. 11. 18---22. 2 Though no Church-way is left by Christ for preventing or healing such evils in men that should not be of the Church; yet, if they were kept out of the Church, till their fitness of communion should appear; as these evils, and the like, would not inevitably break into

Churches,

Churches, so neither need any *Church-members be let alone in their wickedness*, seeing Christ hath delegated *the Keys of the Kingdome of Heaven*, to *binde* and *loose*, and Directions how to manage them toward delinquent Members that are orderly admitted into Church-communion, *Mat.* 16.17,18,19. Nor need they who are not thus joyned to the Church, be *let alone*, if the Authority in Families, and in the Common-wealth, be wisely and faithfully managed by the Rulers of both, to restrain those under their power from evil companies, and courses, and to constrain them to a constant reverent attendance to all Family-duties of Religion, and to the Word publickly Preached in Church-Assemblies, and to the Sanctifying of the Christian Sabbath, as a Day of holy Rest unto the Lord. Such means will be blessed of Christ, to the preventing of the out-breakings, and some of them to the healing of those evils Faith being wrought in their hearts, through the efficacy of the Spirit, in and by the Preaching of the Word; and so they will become fit to be received into Church-membership and communion.

Having thus examined their third Proposition, I finde it destitute of Scripture-proofs, and therefore must leave it, as Irregular, and not agreeing with the *Positions* formerly given, for *Rules of Tryal, whether Doctrines and Practises in matters of Church-Order, agree with the Principles of Truth, or not.* I proceed to examine their fourth Proposition, for answer to the first Question.

" Propos. 4. *Those adult persons are not therefore to be admitted* " *to full Communion, meerly because they are, and continue* " *Members, without such further qualifications as the Word of* " *God requireth thereunto. The truth hereof*, they say, *is* " *plain.*

Reply. Though it seems to them plain, yet it seems not sufficiently cleared by their Proofs. " 1. *From* 1 Cor. 11. 28,29. " *where it is required, that such as come to the Lords Supper, be able* " *to examine themselves, and to discern the Lords Body; else they will* " *eat and drink unworthily, and eat and drink damnation, or judge-* " *ment to themselves, when they partake of this Ordinance. But meer* " *membership is separable from such ability to examine one's self,*

and

" *and discern the Lords Body, as in the children of the Covenant that* " *grow up to years is too often seen.*

Repl. 1. The want of such abilities in the children of the Covenant, is indeed too often seen, through the too frequent neglect of Parents in their Education, and of Ministers and Churches in their Institution, and Catechizing, and Watching over them: which should awaken their circumspection in looking narrowly to their fitness for *personal Membership* when they grow up to years.

2. Though Membership be separable from, yea destitute of such ability in the infant-seed, or children of the Covenant in their minority, and therefore they are not to be admitted unto the *Lords Supper*, and that text proves it; yet it may not be granted that, when they are grown up to years, they are, and continue Members regularly, being through want of that ability not fit for Church-communion personally. For as if adult persons, being unbaptized, should desire to have the Covenant, and their Church-membership sealed by Baptism, they must hold forth Faith in Christ, wrought in their hearts, as *Philip* required the Eunuch, before they may be baptized, *Acts* 8 36 37. So, by parity of reason, if one baptized in infancy, being grown up to years, desires to be joyned to the Church by his own personal Right he must hold forth his personal Faith in the Son of God, to their charitable satisfaction, that they may know his ability *to examine himself, and discern the Lords Body*, before they admit him into *personal Membership*, which infers full communion with the Church.

" 2. They say, that, *In the Old Testament, though men did con-* " *tinue members of the Church, yet for ceremonial uncleanness they* " *were to be kept from full communion in the holy things*, Lev. 7. 20, " 21. Numb. 9. 6, 7. & 19. 13, 20. *yea, and the Priests and Pur-* " *ters had special charge, that men should not partake in all the holy* " *things, unless duely qualified for the same, notwithstanding their* " *membership*, 2 Chron. 23. 19. Ezek 22. 26 & 44. 7, 8, 9, 23. " *and therefore much more in these times, where Moral filths and* " *Spiritual qualifications are wanting, Membership alone is not suf-* " *ficient for full communion. More was required to admit persons eating* " *the Passover, then meer membership: therefore so there is now to the* " *Lords Supper*, &c.

Reply. 1. The invalidity of Proofs from the Old Testament, under *Moses*, being applied to Gospel-Ordinances under Christ, and so this of Baptism under the New Testament, in things whereof there is not the like reason, hath been declared in the *fourth, sixth,* and *eighth Position*, with which this Proof doth not agree.

2. If the Texts alledged were applicable to Church-members in the times of the Gospel; yet they suit not the case in question. For, all men, that were accounted Members of that Jewish Church had full communion with that Church in all Legal Ordinances; even they that were ceremonially unclean had so, before their uncleanness, and after they were healed of their uncleannesses, as well as others.

3. Particularly: 1. The typical uncleanness in *Levit.* 7. 20, 21, &c. signified, that all Unbelievers, Hypocrites, and Wicked ones, that, professing the Gospel, partake of the outward Signs and Seals of Grace *unworthily, do eat and drink condemnation, or judgement, to themselves*; according to 1 *Corinth.* 11. 28, 29. 2. Those in *Numb.* 9. 6. who were unclean by the dead, might not come into the *Lords Sanctuary*, nor into the *Lords Camp*, as also every *Leper*, or *one that hath an Issue*, *Numb.* 5. 2. Those legal pollutions signified sin of all sorts, and the removal of such out of the *Lords Sanctuary* and *Camp*, figured the removal of scandalous and impenitent sinners out of Church-communion, though they were in it before, and the keeping them from admittance into Church-fellowship, if they were not in before: for, *The unclean may not come into it*, Isa. 52. 1. *Any thing that defileth, may in no wise enter into it*, Rev. 21. 27. 3. That Text in *Numb.* 19. 13, 20. concerns one who, being defiled by the dead, yet presumptuously came into the Tabernacle, that is, into the Court of it, in his uncleanness, that man must be *cut off*: Otherwise, if he did it ignorantly, he was to bring *a sacrifice*, Lev. 5. 3---6. because he defiled the Sanctuary by coming into it, before he was purified. This, and the former Texts, figured, in reference to Gospel-Churches, not the distinction between meer Members, and Members in Communion, (for no such distinction of adult Members was known or made in that Church) but

but that they ſhould not admit any that are ſpiritually unclean (as all that are viſibly unregenerate are, *Tit.*1.15,16.) into Church-communion. And that they ſhould put away from Church-communion, by Excommunication, ſuch as were in Church-communion before ſuch uncleanneſs appeared in them, till their healing ſhould be manifeſted. 4. That which is added, concerning the charge given to the *Prieſts and Porters*, had been more fully, and ſo more truly expreſſed, if they had ſaid, Their charge was, *that men ſhould not partake of all the holy things, unleſs duely qualified for the ſame, notwithſtanding their* (not *Membership*, in their ſenſe but) *Membership in full communion with the Church*. For, ſuch Members the men of *Iſrael* were, before their Legal uncleanneſs: and they were alſo charged to keep out the Heathen uncircumciſed in fleſh, who never were Members. That text in *Ezek.*44.7,8,9. is a Propheſie of the times of the Goſpel, expreſſed under legal phraſes, according to the manner uſual with the Prophets, wherein the Goſpel-Churches, and their Officers, are forewarned (by the example of the Jews, under the Old Teſtament, with whom God was highly offended for the like abomination) not to admit ſuch as are uncircumciſed in heart into Church-fellowſhip, to defile the Lords Sanctuary, which is (not now, as then it was, a material Houſe, but) a Society of Saints, called, *an holy Generation, a Royal Prieſthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar People, that they might ſhew forth the vertues of him, who hath called them out of darkneſs into his marvellous light*, 1 Pet. 2. 9. Such men therefore as cannot approve themſelves to the Churches charitable judgement, to anſwer this deſcription, in ſome meaſure, ſhould not be received into Church-fellowſhip.

Whereas they adde, that "*More was required to adult perſons* "*eating the Paſſover, than meer Membership; therefore ſo there* "*is now to the Lords Supper.*

Reply. It is true, that more then that Membership, which they had in their infancy, or minority, was required in adult perſons to eat the Paſſover. For, 1. When they became adult, they were to covenant ſolemnly with the Lord, and his People, in their own perſons, *Deut.*26.17, *&c.* whereunto heart fitneſs was neceſſary, that their perſons and ſervices might be accepted

of God, in that Church-communion, *Isa.* 56 4, 5. with *Deut.* 30.6. 2. This heart-fitneſs was alſo to be exerciſed, when they were to eat the Paſſover, ſuitably to the nature, end, and uſe of that Ordinance, 2 *Chron.* 30.6---9, 18, 19, &c. Thus they were to keep the Paſſover, once every year, all the daves of their life, till *Chriſt our Paſſover* was come: Since which time it is ſpiritually to be kept by Believers under the Goſpel particularly, in our communicating at the Lords Table) in remembrance of his Death, and of our Redemption thereby, untill he come, 1 *Cor.* 5. 7,8 & 11.25,26. but all they that did eat the Paſſover, were Members in full communion. The Membership of adult perſons then was not a meer Membership, but a Membership in full Church-communion. So it ought to be now.

"They ſay, *Though all Members of the Church are the Subjects* "*of Baptiſm, they and their children, yet all Members may not* "*partake of the Lords Supper, as is further manifeſt from the dif-* "*ferent nature of Baptiſm and the Lords Supper*, &c.

Reply. 1. Church-membership infers ſuch Church-communion, as is ſuitable to that Membership. The Membership of the children of Confederates, in minority, infers Church-communion, ſo far as they are capable of it, in and by their Parents covenanting for them, being not capable of covenanting for themſelves: Hence they have communion with the Church by being baptized 1 *Cor.* 12. 13. So the Church-membership of adult perſons, infers Church-communion in all Ordinances, particularly in the Lords Supper, 1 *Cor* 12. 13. and in Voting and Cenſures, 1 *Cor.* 5. 12. Therefore no adult perſon may be received into *meer Membership*, regularly, untill he be qualified fitly for other Ordinances and for Voting and judging in Church-affairs, 1 *Cor.* 5. 12. So much for the fourth Propoſition.

"Propoſ. 5. Their fifth Propoſition is: *Church-members,* "*who were admitted in minority, unaerſtanding the Doctrine of* "*Faith, and publickly profeſſing their aſſent thereunto, not ſcan-* "*dalous in life, and ſolemnly owning the Covenant before the* "*Church, wherein they give up themſelves and their children to* "*the Lord, and ſubject themſelves to the Government of Chriſt* "*in the Church, their children are to be baptized.*

Reply.

Reply. This Propoſition agreeth not with our tenth Poſition, where more is declared, from Scripture, to be required unto Church-membership, in reference both to infants and adult perſons, then is here expreſſed. Yet, ſay they, "*This is evident from* "*the Arguments following.* But to him who ſhall duely examine their Arguments by the Light of the Word and Spirit of God, in the New Teſtament, the Propoſition will appear to be not evidenced by them, as we ſhall evince, by the help of Chriſt, in examining the particulars.

"Arg. 1. *Theſe children are partakers of that which is the* "*main ground of baptizing any children whatſoever; and neither the* "*Parents nor the children do put in any barre to hinder it.* This they endeavour to prove in the two parts of it, ſeverally.

"1. *That they partake of that which is the main ground of ba-* "*ptizing any*, they ſay, *is clear; Becauſe intereſt in the Covenant* "*is the main ground of title to Baptiſm: and this infants have.*

Reply. The Parents muſt be fitly qualified before they may be admitted to Covenant with the Lord, and his Church, for themſelves and their children: Elſe the Covenant will be profaned; and ſuch covenanting cannot regularly give them, and their children, an intereſt in the Covenant, and title to Baptiſm. The Parents, or adult perſons, regularly admitted to Covenant, muſt be Believers in Chriſt, effectually called, in the charitable judgement of the Church, judging according to Rule: for to ſuch only, and their ſeed, is the Promiſe, or Covenant, *Act.* 2.39 If the Primitive Churches had not exactly looked for this qualification in the men whom they admitted unto Church-membership, the Apoſtles neither could, nor would have ſtyled thoſe to whom they wrote their Epiſtles, *Beloved of God*, called *Saints*, Rom. 1.7. *Sanctified in Chriſt Jeſus*, 1 Cor. 1.2. *Faithful in Chriſt Jeſus*, Eph 1.1. *Saints in Chriſt Jeſus*, Phil. 1.1. *The Church which is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* 1 Theſſ 1.1 which they did not by the judgement of Infallibility, from Divine Revelation, but from the judgement of Charity, from what they heard of them, and ſaw in them, *Rom.* 1.8. 1 *Cor* 1.4. *Eph* 1. 15, 16. *Col.* 1. 3,4,5. & 2.5. *Phil.* 1.3,5,6,7. 1 *Theſſ.* 1.3,4,5,9. Therefore, whereas they ſay,

" *That a Member, or one in Covenant, as ſuch, is the ſubject of* " *Baptiſm, is further cleared in Propoſ.* 1.

Reply. The light which that Propoſition holdeth forth for clearing this is in one clauſe, which is here omitted, *viz. According to Scripture.* " *They that according to Scripture are Members of the viſible Church, are the ſubjects of Baptiſm*, &c. Now, according to Scripture, the Covenant was differently adminiſtred, in different times of the Church. Under *Abraham* it was adminiſtred by Circumciſion to all that were of his Houſe, and to their ſeed abiding in his Family: For the Church was then onely in *Abrahams* Family, and after him in the Families of *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, until *Moſe*; yet even then the Circumciſion of all Parents did not intereſt their ſeed in the Covenant, and firſt Seal of it, as may be ſeen in the Poſterity of *Eſau*, and of *Abraham* himſelf by *Keturah*. 2. Under *Moſes*, it was adminiſtred to the twelve Tribes ſuitably unto that Ceremonial and Typical ſtate of the Church, which was then National, *Deut.* 4. 7, 8. and the Proſelytes, who were then added to them, were to be ordered by the ſame Laws with the People of Iſrael; for, *Acceſſorium ſequitur naturam Principalis.* This adminiſtration of the Covenant was, according to the Scripture of the Old Teſtament, until Chriſt came; under Chriſt, the Covenant is adminiſtred, according to what hath been expreſſed in the Poſitions formerly noted; particularly, the tenth Poſition.

" 2. *That theſe children have intereſt in the Covenant*, they ſay, " *appears*; 1. *Becauſe if the parent be in Covenant, the childe is alſo*, " &c. *But the parents in queſtion are in Covenant*, &c.

Reply. 1. Adde, *According to Goſpel-Rules, given by Chriſt unto Chriſtian Churches for admittance of perſons ſpiritually fit for Church-covenant and communion.* Thus; if Parents be in Covenant, according to Goſpel-Rules, the infant-childe or childe in minority, is ſo alſo; elſe the Propoſition muſt be denied: That being added, the Aſſumption is to be denied. Then, according to that addition it may be granted alſo, that, if the Parent ſtand in the Church, ſo doth the childe in infancy, or minority, among the Gentiles now, as well as among the Jews of old, *Rom.* 11. 16,20--22. They ſay, " *It is unheard of in Scripture, that the*

" *progreſs*

"*progreſs of the Covenant ſtops at the infant childe.* *Reply.* Nor do we ſay it doth, but at the adult perſon, or Parent, who breaks the Covenant; and that the *progreſs of the Covenant ſtops there* from the children alſo, it is not unheard-of in Scripture: for the Scripture hath told us of the ſtopping of the Covenant in *Iſhmael, Eſau*, and *Abrahams* poſterity by *Keturah*, after they were ſent away from the Church in *Iſaac*'s family. Nor do their Reaſons prove the Aſſumption.

The firſt is, "*Becauſe they were once in Covenant, and never* "*ſince diſcovenanted. If they had not been once in Covenant, they had* "*not warrantably been baptized; and they are ſo ſtill, except in ſome* "*way of God they have been diſcovenanted, caſt out, or cut off, which* "*theſe have not been.*

Reply. 1. If they had not ſpiritual fitneſs for the Covenant, Parents, or adult perſons were not regularly in Covenant, nor are their children in infancy, or minority, warrantably baptized. And, when thoſe infants are grown up, though they have not been diſcovenanted, by being caſt out, or cut off from their Covenant-relation; yet they are diſcovenanted, by their violating their Parents Covenant for them, through their not performing that whereunto they were engaged thereby, in that, when they became adult, they did not regularly enter into Covenant with the Lord and his Church, for themſelves and theirs, as their Parents, if they were godly, did, *Rom.*2 25. 2. Though they ſay, "*Perſons once in Covenant are not broken off from it, according* "*to Scripture, ſave for notorious ſins, and incorrigibleneſs therein,* "*which is not the caſe of theſe Parents.* Yet if they break off themſelves, by breaking the Covenant which was ſealed by Baptiſm in their infancy, or minority; they thereby deprive themſelves of the benefits and priviledges of the Covenant, as it hath been proved. And, in ſuch a caſe, they are to be looked at, like thoſe of whom *John* ſpeaks, 1 *Joh.*2.19.

"2. *Becauſe the tenour of the Covenant is to the faithful* "*and their ſeed after them in their generations*, Gen.17.7. *even* "*to a thouſand generations*, i.e. *conditionally, provided that the Pa-* "*rents ſucceſſively do continue to be keepers of the Covenant*, Exod. "20 6. Deut.7.9,11. Pſal.105.8. *which the Parents in queſtion*

are,

" are, because they are not (in Scripture account in this case) forsakers " or rejecters of the God and Covenant of their fathers: see Deut. " 29.25,26. 2 Kings 17.15--20 2 Chron. 7.22. Deut 7.10.

Reply. 1. The tenour of the Covenant in Gen. 17.7 had (as it hath been formerly noted) a special respect unto *Isaac* v. 19. for in *Isaac* was *Abrahams* seed to be called, Gen. 21.12. *So the children of the flesh are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are accounted for the seed*, Rom. 9.8. The sealing of this Covenant to the Posterity of *Isaac* and *Jacob*, by Circumcision, was to continue throughout their generations, till the coming of Christ. The Covenant in the tenour of it, is, for substance, the same to us as it was to them (though the outward Signs and manner of dispensing it, differ) it being established by the blood of Christ, *Luke* 1.69,72,73. *Heb.* 13.20. The extending the Covenant *to a thousand generations*, themselves say, is *conditional, provided that the Parents successively do continue to be keepers of the Covenant*. Such a succession in the Covenant, through Faith, is not to be found even in the best Churches that ever were in the world for a thousand, or an hundred generations: But such the Parents in question are not. For though they are not such forsakers and rejecters of God, and the Covenant of their fathers, as they who are spoken of in *Deut.* 29 25 26 2 *Kings* 17. 15--20 2 *Chron.* 7.22. Yet, besides that gross Idolatry, there is a spiritual Idolatry, in scandalous Covetousness, *Colos.* 3.5. and Worldly-mindedness whereby men forsake and reject God and his Covenant, to serve the World, *Mat.* 6.24. 1 *Tim.* 6.17. 1 *Joh.* 2.15. to these, the text alledged by them in *Deut.* 7.10. may fitly be applied; and they forsake the Covenant of God, as *Isa.* 4.4. and such may they be, who answer all the terms of their fifth Proposition, externally and visibly. Now, the Religion of such is no better then that of the *Shechemites*, who took upon them the Religion of the Jews and were circumcised only for worldly ends, Gen 34.22,23,24. Such Religion will end in Apostacy, in times of Persecution for the Truth, *Mat.* 13 21.

" 2. *That the Parents in question do not put a barre to hinder their* " *children from Baptism*, they say, *is plain from the words of the* " *Proposition*, &c.

Reply.

Reply. 1. Notwithſtanding what is ſaid in the Propoſition, Parents may put a bar to hinder their children from being baptized regularly. A man may do and be all that is there required, yet have no Faith in Chriſt, but be an unregenerate perſon; and that will put a bar to hinder himſelf and his infant-ſeed from entring into the Kingdome of God, *Joh.* 3. 3,5. and, by conſequence, from the Seal of entrance. 2. Nor can they prove that all adult perſons, whom they admit into perſonal and immediate Membership, are ſuch as the Propoſition deſcribeth. For, I demand, Doth y all underſtand the Doctrine of Faith? What courſe do they take to know it? If they do not, their publickly profeſſing their aſſent thereunto, is a meer mockery. A Parret-like ſaying the Doctrine of Faith, and an ignorant aſſent thereunto, may juſtly be a bar of groſs Ignorance, Atheiſm, and Infidelity, and Hypocriſie. *Philip* brought the Eunuch to underſtand what he read, before it could become a word of faith to him, *Act.* 8. 2. Nor is literal underſtanding what they aſſent to, ſufficient to remove all bars: Theſe the Devils do, *Jam.* 2. 19. *a right manner of knowing and aſſenting*, muſt be added. Such a manner of knowing, whereby the Church may judge that Chriſt is let into the Soul. As Reverend Mr. *Hooker* was wont to ſay, *Such a profeſſed Aſſent, as hath a profeſſed Conſent joyned with it*, *Iſa.* 1. 19. Such a manner of knowing and conſenting, as produceth Obedience flowing from Faith: which is the next end of the Miniſtery of the Goſpel, *Rom.* 1. 5. & 16. 26. Elſe, *they are defiled, and unbelieving, to whom nothing is pure, but even their minde and conſcience is defiled, who profeſs that they know God, but in their works they deny him*, Tit 1. 15 16. 3 And though they are not ſcandalous in life, but *ſolemnly own the Covenant before the Church, wherein they give up themſelves and their children to the Lord, and ſubject themſelves to the Government of Chriſt in his Church*; yet all theſe may be affirmed of many *who have a form of godlineſs, but deny the power thereof: From ſuch, Paul* (who taught him how he ought to *behave himſelf in the Houſe of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of Truth*, 1 Tim. 3. 15.) warned *Timothy* to *turn away*, 2 Tim. 3. 5! 4. But are all the adult perſons, whom they admit into Member-

ſhip, ſuch as the Propoſition deſcribes? Do they take a right courſe to know they are ſuch? 1. *That they are not ſcandalous in life:* What teſtimony or certain knowledge have they, that the Church may confide in, that they frequent not looſe and vain Company in diſorderly Night-meeting, at unſeaſonable hours, and in ſuſpected places, in unwarrantable Gamings and Drinkings, &c? not to ſpeak of other evils. 2 How do they *Solemnly own the Covenant before the Church?* when ſome of them having publickly ſaid, They do own it; being afterward asked in private, What is the Covenant which you owned? anſwered, I do not know. 3. As for their *Subjecting themſelves to the Government of Chriſt in the Church*; Do they orderly ſubmit to the Government of their Family-Governours, Parents and Maſters, &c? If the Church know not that, How can they expect that they will really ſubject themſelves to Chriſt's Government in the Church? Yea, if they have not been *weary and heavy loaden*, and then came unto Chriſt, they are not fit to take his yoke and burthen upon them, *Matth.* 11.28,29. I proceed to their ſecond Argument.

"Arg. 2. *The children of the Parents in queſtion are either children of the Covenant, or ſtrangers from the Covenant; either holy or unclean, either within the Church or without, either ſuch as have God for their God, or without God in the world. But he that conſidereth the Propoſition, will not affirm the latter concerning theſe children: and the former being granted, infers their right to Baptiſm.*

Reply. The more ſeriouſly I conſider their Propoſition, the leſs I finde in it, to evince the former, and the more, to conclude the latter; *viz.* That if a man have no more then the Propoſition holds forth, he may be a ſtranger from the Covenant, unclean, and without the Church, in Scripture account *Rom.* 9 6,7 8. and without God in the world, through want of faith in Chriſt, whereby the heart is purified, and men have an intereſt in Chriſt, and in God through Chriſt.

"Arg. 3. *To deny the Propoſition, would be* 1. *To ſtraiten the grace of Chriſt in the Goſpel-diſpenſation,* &c. 2. *To render the children of the Jews, when they ſhall be called, in a worſe condition*

then

" *then under legal Administrations, contrary to* Jer. 30 10. Ezek. 37.
" 25,26. 3. *To deny the application of the initiatory Seal to such*
" *as regularly stand in the Church and Covenant,* &c. 4. *To break*
" *Gods Covenant, by denying the initiatory Seal to those that are in*
" *covenant*, Gen. 17.9,10,14.

Reply. The contrary to all, and every one of these, is true. For, 1. It enlargeth the Grace of Christ in the Gospel-dispensation by shewing that Christian Churches are in a more spiritual and gracious frame and state, then the Jews of old were, under Legal Dispensations: which therefore are not continued and propagated by a natural succession, as that National Church was, but by Gods *calling them with an holy calling, according to his purpose and grace*, 2 Tim. 1.9. and adding thereby to the Christian Church *such as*, in their charitable judgement, *shall be saved*, Acts 2.43. 2. It declareth that the state of the Jews, when they shall be called, will be far better then it was under Legal Dispensations, yea, then the condition of the Gentiles is now. For, under the Law, their light and holiness was defective, and Christian Churches now, how careful soever they be in point of admittance, cannot avoid the creeping in of Hypocrites: but the Jews, when they shall be called, shall have a far greater measure of light and holiness then was to be found in former ages of the Churches, and all the Members of the *New Jerusalem* shall be Elect, they and their children successively; and no Hypocrite shall be mingled with them, *Rev.* 21. & 22. 3. Nor doth the denial of the Proposition, infer a denial of the application of the initiatory Seal to such as stand regularly in the Church and Covenant: but the contrary. 4. Nor doth it break Gods Covenant, by denying Baptism to such as are regularly in Covenant. These are Accusations without Proof.

" Arg. 4. *Confederate visible Believers, though but in the lowest*
" *degree, such are to have their children baptized: But the Parents in*
" *question are confederate visible Believers, at least in some degree.*

Reply. The *major* being granted, the *minor* is denied. For, 1. All that is laid in the Proposition, may be affirmed of sundry that have not visible saving Faith in Christ, in the lowest degree. Therefore these are no sufficient grounds for charity to account them Believers in Christ, in the least degree. Let them that are

to be admitted into Membership, by their personal right, shew how Faith was wrought, and how it works in them, in the lowest degree: then the Church will have some ground for their charitable judgement concerning their fitness for regular Church-membership and communion. 2. Nor are the children of the godly, qualified but as the persons in the Propositions, said to be fait ful in *Tit.*1.6. whether we understand that Text in a Moral, or Spiritual sense: The first, is a fruit of Moral Principles and Education; these are short of the qualifications in the Proposition: The second, is a fruit of the Spirit *Gal.*5.22. These are Believers in Christ, *Acts* 16.15. 3 Epist *Joh.* ver. 5. and are qualified above what the Proposition requireth. 3. They say, "*Children of the Covenant, as the Parents in question are, have fre-*"*quently the beginnings of grace wrought in them in younger years:* "*Hence this sort of persons, shewing nothing to the contrary, are in cha-*"*rity, or to Ecclesiastical reputation, visible Believers.*

Repl. 1 It remains to be proved, that the Parents in question are children of the Covenant: They were children of the Covenant in their infancy and minority, and bound thereby, when they became adult, to covenant for themselves and their seed, in their own persons, being fitly qualified, as their godly Parents did before them: If they, being grown up to be men, perform not this Covenant, they cannot fitly be called *Children of the Covenant*, but *Transgressours of the Covenant, and Breakers of it.* 2. The Argument is fallacious: Some children of the Covenant have had the *beginnings of grace manifestly wrought in them in younger years. Therefore all persons of this sort, shewing nothing to the contrary, are, in charity, or to Ecclesiastical reputation, visible Believers.* This Argument is to be denied: both because it argues from some Particulars, to infer a General affirmatively; and from that which is positively manifest, in some, to prove the same to be in others, in whom it is not positively manifest, but only they shew nothing to the contrary: which makes them at best but Negative Christians, which is not to be Christian indeed.

"4. They say, *They that are regularly in the Church (as the*"*Parents in question are) are visible Saints: for the Church is (in*"*Scripture account) a company of Saints,* 1 Cor. 14.33. & 1.2.

Reply.

Rep. Both their Assertion, and their Proof of it, are to be denied. 1. The Assertion is not true, that the Parents in question are regularly in the Church. Infants and children in minority of confederate Believers, are in the Church, by their Parents covenanting for them, 1 Cor. 7. 14. But Parents are not regularly in the Church, till, being fitly qualified they confederate for themselves, and their children under age, *Acts* 2. 39 being qualified according to that Prophesie concerning the Gospel-times, in *Isa.* 56. 6, 7. 2. The Proof is not apposite: for, *Paul* wrote that Epistle to the adult Members regularly admitted unto full communion with the Church at *Corinth*, whom he styleth, *Sanctified in Christ Jesus*, 1 Cor. 1. 2. and such were they of whom he speaks *in all the Churches of the Saints*, 1 Cor. 14. 33. But the Parents in question, being *meer Members*, not in full communion, are not regularly approved of the Church to be such. Therefore this concerns not them.

"5. They say, *Being in Covenant, and baptized, they have* "*Faith and Repentance indefinitely given to them in the Promise, and* "*sealed in Baptism*, Deut. 30. 6. *which continues valid, and so a va-* "*lid testimony for them, while they do not reject it.*

Reply. Reverend Mr. *Cotton* was wont to say, *Elect children have the grace of the Covenant*, viz *Faith and Repentance* &c. *given to them, in and by the Covenant, and sealed by Baptism*, Deut. 30. 6. *but the rest have onely the Covenant of Grace, for external means of grace, given in the Promise, and sealed by Baptism, till they reject them.* This testimony is true, and this distinction is grounded upon Scripture, *Rom.* 11 7. and it is necessary, to prevent that Opinion of *Universal Baptism-Grace*, which the *Arminians* improve to establish their dangerous Errour of the *final and total Apostacy of the Saints from Grace.* But God, who hath promised, is faithful, and will do according to his Promise, working effectually in the Elect, in his appointed time, the grace promised in the Covenant, so powerfully that they shall not reject it; the rest shall have the outward means of Grace, according to his Promise, till they reject them, as *Esau* did. To these, Faith and Repentance are not indefinitely given in the Promise, and sealed by outward Baptism; as neither was it given in the Promise, and sealed by outward Cir-

cumcision indefinitely to those who, when they became adult, brake the Covenant. Whereupon *Paul* distinguished the Jews and Circumcision, *Rom.* 2. 28 29. and answerable thereunto is *Peters* distinction of Baptism 1 *Pet.* 3. 24. Therefore such as reject the offers of Grace as all that living under the means of Grace remain unbelievers, do *Mat.* 23. 37. cannot be said to have Faith and Repentance indefinitely given to them in the Promise, in that sense, wherein that phrase is used in 2 *Pet.* 1. 4.

" They adde, *Yet it doth not necessarily follow, that these persons* " *are immediately fit for the Lords-Supper*, &c.

Reply. If they have Faith and Repentance given them under Gods Hand in the Covenant, and sealed by Baptism; and if they do so receive them, that it continues valid; and so as valid testimony for them: What can hinder regularly such Church-members from partaking of the Lords Supper, &c? They say, " *Because, though they are in a state of expectation, to be accounted* " *visible Believers, or* in numero fidelium; *as even infants in covenant* " *are, yet they want that ability of examining themselves, and that* " *special exercise of Faith, which is requisite to that Ordinance, as was* " *said upon the fourth Proposition.*

Reply. 1. *If any man speak, let him speak as the Oracles of God,* 1 *Pet.* 4. 11. The New Testament no where alloweth that latitude of speech to call men visible Believers, who never were regularly joyned to that number, nor fitly qualified to take hold of the Covenant personally for themselves and their children. 2. Nor can they be accounted Believers, or in the number of Believers, as infants are, who are looked at onely as in their Parents Covenant, being not capable of covenanting for themselves, as men are: So that there is not *par ratio* between them. 3. Visible want of ability to examine themselves, and of that special exercise of Faith which is requisite to that Ordinance, argues a visible want of that Faith which is to be examined and exercised, and is a just bar to the admittance of such into immediate and personal Church-membership, as well as to the Lords Supper, &c.

" Arg. 5: *The denial of Baptism to the children in question, hath* " *a dangerous tendency to Irreligion and Apostacy; because it denies*

them

"them, and so the children of the Church successively, to have any "part in the Lord, which is the way to make them cease from fearing "the Lord, Josh. 22.24,25.

Reply. The children in question, are children of Parents who are not members in full communion with the Church, and so not regularly personal Members. If such & their children be denied to have any part in the Lord, it is the degenerate Parents, not the Churches fault. They who are not in Church-communion, cannot regularly communicate unto their infant-seed a right and title to Baptism, which is the first visible Seal of Church-communion, 1 Cor. 12.13. 2. It is not true, that the Churches denying Baptism to the children in question, is a denial of the children of the Church to have any part in the Lord; for such are not, according to Scripture Rules, children of the Church successively: for the Parents have cut off the Entail of the Covenant from themselves and their seed, by their not confederating for themselves and theirs regularly. 3. That *this denial has a dangerous tendency to Irreligion and Apostacy*, is not proved by them, nor can be. That Text in Josh. 22.24,25. speaks nothing for their advantage in this case; for the men there spoken of, were Members in full communion with the Church of Israel, and their children, when they were grown up, were joyned in Covenant personally, and immediately with the Lord and his Church, by a solemn Covenant, every third year, Deut. 26.17,18. which was to continue in Canaan, throughout their generations, till the coming of Christ. So that they had a part in the Lord successively, from which if they had been excluded causally, it might have caused their children to cease from fearing the Lord. But Christ hath not appointed any such Ordinance, to continue such a succession in Christian Churches under the Gospel. Therefore the Text in Josh. doth nothing at all concern the children of Parents in question.

The tendency of the following Discourse is to prove, that "*The owning of the children of those that successively continue in Covenant to be a part of the Church, is so far from being destructive to the purity and prosperity of the Church, and Religion therein, that this imputation belongs to the contrary Tenent.*

Reply.

Reply. They, who ſo conceive, have ſuch grounds of that perſwaſion, as will not eaſily be removed nor are ſo much as ſhaken by any thing ſaid in their Book. I willingly grant, that *to ſeek to be more holy than the Rule, will ever end in impurity in the iſſue:* but that cannot be truly applied to thoſe who conceive herein according to Goſpel Rules. Let them alſo grant, that to increaſe, continue, and propagate Churches under the Goſpel, by means not ordained by Chriſt under the New Teſtament, but oppoſite thereunto, is to gather without Chriſt, which will ever end in ſcattering in the iſſue, and then, What will become of the purity and proſperity of Chriſtian Churches? It is true, that the frame of the Covenant runs, *Thou, and to our ſeed after us in their generations*; but it muſt be underſtood and applied ſuitably to the different conſtitution of Churches, under different adminiſtrations of the Covenant, under the Old Teſtament, and under the Goſpel.

" They ſay, that, *To keep in the Line, and under the influence* " *and efficacy of this Covenant of God, is the true way to the Cour-* " *ches glory.*

Reply. It is indeed the Churches glory to keep in the Line, and under the influence and efficacy of this Covenant, ſucceſſively, when the Spirit, as a free Agent, brings any into that Line, and under that efficacy of the Covenant by ſucceſſion in Faith, as he did *Lois* the Grandmother, and *Eunice* the Daughter, and *Timothy* her Grandchilde, 2 *Tim.* 1. 5. That is the only true Goſpel ſucceſſion, when it is made viſible to the Churches charitable judgment, according to Goſpel Rules. But that cannot be done, by ſetting up ſuch a *Meer Membership* in Chriſtian Churches, whereby the infants ſhall be baptized, by a right derived to them from Parents, who are not in full communion with the Church by their perſonal Membership. What influence and efficacy hath the Covenant upon ſuch Parents as are in ſuch a Membership, wherein the Church judgeth them unfit for communion? and that, not for any Scandal given by them, after their admiſſion, but for the nature of their *Meer Membership.* To diſavow ſuch a Membership, is ſo far from cutting off the proſperity of *Sion*, and from hindring it from being, as in the moſt glorious times it

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ſhall be, *An eternal Excellency, and the joy of many generations*, that this imputation belongs to the contrary Tenent, which is here aſſerted.

But they argue; "*This progreſs of the Covenant eſtabliſheth the* "*Church*, Deut. 29. 13. Jer 30. 20. *Therefore the contrary doth diſ-* "*eſtabliſh it.*

Reply. The Argument is to be denied. For, it will not follow, that, if God did eſtabliſh the Church of the Jews, before the coming of Chriſt, by ſuch a ſucceſſive progreſs of the Covenant in *Deut.* 29. 13. therefore he doth ſo now. As for the place *Jer.* 30 20. where it is ſaid, that *the children of the Jews ſhall be as aforetime*; it is meant only of their outward condition, that it ſhall be as good as before the Captivity. See *Engl. Annotat.* This place then is impertinent to Circumciſion or Baptiſm. But there is a manifeſt difference between the conſtitution of theſe Churches. The Church of the Jews before Chriſt, was, for the matter of it, of the Iſraelites deſcended from *Jacob*, by ſucceſſive natural propagation; yet this ſucceſſive progreſs of the Covenant, did not then eſtabliſh the whole Church of Iſrael in the twelve Tribes: for the ten Tribes fell off under *Jeroboam*, and never returned again. The Church of the Jews that ſhall be under the *New Jeruſalem*, muſt conſiſt, for the matter of it, of Elect and Sincere Believers onely, both they and their children ſucceſſively to the end of the world, according to the Propheſies in *Iſa.* 60. 15. & 50. 21. *Jer.* 32. 39. Ezek. 37. 25---28. *Pſal.* 102. 16, 28. and ſundry other places. But Chriſtian Churches among the Gentiles now are conſtituted of viſible Believers, for the matter of them, among whom ſundry cloſe Hypocrites creep in. The progreſs of the Covenant in them, by Chriſts Ordinance, is thus far ſucceſſive, that the children in minority of confederate viſible Believers ſhall be baptized, and thereby bound, when they become adult, to perform the Covenant in their own perſons, and to confederate for themſelves and theirs, as their godly Parents did before them: which if they do not, thoſe Parents by their degeneracy ſtop the ſucceſſive progreſs of the Covenant: In which caſe, Chriſt doth not allow the Churches to provide for a ſucceſſion, by ſetting up a *Meer Membership* of adult perſons, that are viſibly unfit for Church-com-

munion in all Ordinances. Such irregular bringing of men into Membership, will unavoidably bring in the corrupting of Religion, which will end in Apostacy. There be better wayes to convey Religion down to after-generations, and to continue a *Nursery in Christs Vineyard*, then this way of setting up such a successive Membership, which Christ hath not sanctified by his Institution; *viz.* The vigilancy and faithful care and endeavour of Church Elders, and Family-Rulers, to fit them for regular Church-fellowship, in the using of all suitable means, with fervent Prayer to God in Jesus Christ for his blessing upon the same, leaving the issue to his All-disposing wisdome, *who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will*; according whereunto, he with-holdeth from, and addeth unto the Church whom he will, *Acts* 5.13. & 2.47. Nor can I but marvel how it comes to pass, that they who seem to approve Mr. *Cottons Treatise of the Holiness of Church-Members*, (which indeed is worthy to be highly approved) do act as they do, in setting up such a *Meer Membership* of adult persons (as hath no agreement with his description) who are far from personal holiness: The young people of this Countrey, yea, the children of Church-members generally, as well as others, being commonly known to be Profane, Vain, Licentious, Vicious, Disobedient to Parents, Unfaithful to Masters, Stubborn, Proud, Self-willed, and yet these shall be accepted into immediate personal Membership, whereby they become Covenanters for themselves and theirs; to whom the Lord justly saith, as in *Psa.*50. 16, to 23. *What hast thou to do to take my Covenant into thy mouth?*

Obj. *They have the more need to be under the Watch, Discipline, and Government of the Church.*

Answ. Their unfitness for such an holy Fellowship, as Christian Churches are, being so manifest, how can it be rationally expected that they who submit not themselves to the Yoke of Family-Government, will orderly submit themselves to Christs Yoke in Church-censures? But, as the admission of such is without due regard to their Spiritual fitness; so the application of Church-censures to them, will be disregarded and slighted by them. The Churches will have trouble enough with them, and

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dishonour, and infection, and disturbance by them, without any acceptance with God, who will say, *Who hath required these things at your hands?* and without any blessed fruit, either to the Church, or to such *Meer Members*. For, God limits his Blessing to his own Appointments. When *Uzzah put forth his hand to take hold of the Ark of God (for the Oxen shook it) the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah, and he made a breach upon Uzzah*, 2 *Sam.*6.6,7,8. because *they sought not the Lord in the due order*, 1 *Chron.*15.2,13. The application is easie. I proceed to examine their sixth Argument.

" Arg. 6. *The Parents in question are personal, immediate, and* " *yet-continuing Members of the Church.* This they endeavour to prove in the terms severally. " 1. *That they are personal Mem-* " *bers, or Members in their own persons, appears,* 1. *Because they* " *are personally holy.* 2. *Because they are personally baptized.* " 3. *They are personally liable to Church-censures.* 4. *They are* " *personally, by means of the Covenant, in a visible state of Salvation.* " 5. *When they commit iniquity, they personally break the Cove-* " *nant.*

Reply. The Argument hath *Parents* for its Subject, but most of the Proofs belong onely to *Infants*; *viz.* three of them; the other two belong onely to adult persons, regularly admitted into Church-membership, which therefore doth not concern the Parents in question. There are two sorts of Church-members, and both are accounted holy: 1. *Children of Confederates in their minority*, whose right to Membership is from their relation to confederate Parents covenanting for them; whence they are holy, 1 *Cor.*7.14. though not in their persons, yet fœderally & relatively. 2. Are Baptized, though in their persons, yet by and for their Parents covenanting for them, being incapable of covenanting for themselves. 3. They are *personally under Discipline, and liable to Church-censures in their own persons.* This is answered before, when the third Proposition was examined. 4. By *means of the Covenant, their persons are in a visible state of Salvation*; while nothing appears to the contrary 2. *Adult persons*, whose Membership is founded in their own personal Faith, made visible to the regular satisfaction of the Church. To these the other two

properties do agree: 1. That *they are personally under Discipline, and liable to Church-censures in their own persons.* See Propos 3. examined. 2. *When they personally commit iniquity, they personally break the Covenant.* This is not proved concerning infants, nor can be; for that in *Ier.* 11.2,10. is spoken by the Prophet to the men of *Judah:* so that in *Ezek.*16.

" 2. They say, that *Children are immediate Members, as to* " *the essence of Membership*; i.e. *they themselves in their own per-* " *sons are the immediate Subjects of this Adjunct, Membership,* " *though they came to it by means of their Parents covenanting.* This, " they say, *appears by like Reasons* as the former.

Reply. By what is answered to the former, it appears, that personal Membership is of two sorts; 1. *Purely*, or *meerly Personal*; such is the Membership of adult persons regularly admitted: for their Membership is both *subjectively*, and *formally* personal, by their orderly covenanting for themselves. 2. *Mixtly Personal*; such is the Membership of the infants and children in minority of confederate Parents. For their Membership is onely *subjectively Personal*, but *formally Relative*, by their Parents covenanting for them, they being unable to covenant for themselves. To apply this to childrens Membership, which they unfitly style *Immediate:* I say, *unfitly*; for two things are requisite to the denominating of a *Member*, Mediate or Immediate. 1. *To an Immediate Member*, that his Membership arise 1. From his personal Faith, made visible to the Church. 2. From his personal Confederating with the Lord and his Church, for himself and his seed. Such an one is an *Immediate Member*, because his Membership is from himself, as well as in himself. 2. *To a Mediate Member*, 1. That is Membership ariseth, not from his personal Faith made visible to the Church, whereof he is not capable, but from his believing confederate Parents. 2. That it is from such Parents covenanting for him. Such an one is a *Mediate Member*, because his Membership, though it is *subjectively* in himself, yet it is *relatively* from his Parents. Whence it will follow, that this kinde of Membership is peculiar to such infants and children in minority, onely during their non-age. This distinction of *Mediate* and *Immediate Church-members*, the Writers

of

of that Book exagitate cauſleſly, ſaying, " *As touching that* " *diſtinction of Mediate and Immediate, as applied to Membership,* " *(which ſome urge) we are to diſtinguiſh* 1. *Between the Efficient and* " *Eſſence of Membership.* 2. *Between the Inſtrumental Efficient* " *and Means thereof, which is the Parents profeſſion and covenant-* " *ing, and the Principal Efficient, which is Divine Inſtitution. They* " *may be ſaid to be mediate (or rather mediately) members, as they* " *become members by means of their Parents covenanting, as an in-* " *ſtrumental cauſe thereof.*

Reply. I look at believing confederate Parents, not as the inſtrumental, but as the procreant cauſe, as of the childes natural being, by his generating him; ſo alſo of his Church-membership, by his confederating for him, and this by Gods Inſtitution: therefore I chuſe rather to call him a *mediate member*, then to ſay he is a *member immediately*; to ſhew, that the childes Membership differs from the Parents *ſpecifically*, or in the kinde of Membership. For, the childes Membership is *Relative*, in it Eſſence, though *Perſonal*, in its Subject; which doth vary the Eſſence, or Nature of it, from the Parents, which is both in its Eſſence and Subject *meerly Perſonal*. *Divine Inſtitution* giveth a *real*, and *mixtly perſonal membership* to ſuch children by their Parents covenanting for them, as the *immediate procreant cauſe of their membership*, whereby the children become mediate Members, *i. e. mediante Parentum fœdere*, which gives Being to the Membership of ſuch children, and differenceth it from the Membership of adult perſons. *Divine Inſtitution*, though it doth not make every Parent a *Publick Perſon*, againſt which Title I excepted in my *firſt Eſſay*, and whereunto I finde no Anſwer here: Yet it makes ſuch Parents Covenant to be Obligatory to ſuch children, and the Parents act in covenanting for the childe, to be the childes act *interpretatively*, not *formally*, ſo as to make the childe an immediate Member thereby.

" They adde, *Hence the Eſſence of membership*, i. e. *Covenant-* " *intereſt, or a place and portion within the viſible Church, is really,* " *properly, perſonally and immediately the portion of the childe by Divine Gift and Grant*, Joſh. 22. 25, 27.

Reply. The intereſt in the Covenant, and thereby *a place and*

portion in the visible Church, is twofold: 1. *A Childes interest and portion*; which is in and by the Parents covenanting for him, and so is mediate. 2. *A Mans interest and portion*; which is by his own covenanting for himself and his childe, and so is immediate. Though nothing comes between to sever the *Adjunct* from the *Subject*; *The Childe*, from *A portion in the Lord*: yet something comes between to bring that *Adjunct* and *Subject* together; *viz.* *The Parents covenanting for the Childe*; which if it did not come between, they would be severed, as they are in other children, who have no such portion in the Lord, through their want of such Parents to covenant for them. Therefore the Membership of the Infants of confederates is truly and properly said to be mediate.

"*Again, though their visible ingraffing into Christ the Head, and* "*so into the Church his Body, is sealed in their Baptism*: and though "*in ingraffing, nothing comes between the graft and the stock; Their* "*union is immediate.*

Reply. Yet it will not follow, that *they are immediate members of the visible Church*: For, the union between Christ and the Church, and all visible Church-members, is not properly, but Metaphorically called *Ingraffing*, because there is some similitude of this Spiritual Union in Material and Corporal Ingraffing. Now similitudes do not run on four feet (as we commonly say) it sufficeth that they agree in the main point of Union: Whether that Spiritual Union, which is likened to corporal ingraffing of a graft to the stock of a Tree, be mediate, as that of confederate Infants is, or immediate, as that of Parents and adult persons is; both may be called *Ingraffing*, in respect of the event, which the Apostle notes in *Rom.* 11.17. that *both, together with other branches or members, partake of the root and fatness of the Olive-tree*, suitably to their union with it. Mediate Members, as Infants, and children in minority, partake of Baptism, and the special Instruction, Prayers, Blessing, and Watch of the Church, by their Parents covenanting for them: But Parents and adult persons, being immediate Members by their personal covenanting for themselves and their seed, partake of the *root and fatness of the Olive-tree*, in all Ordinances, as, *The Lords Supper, and liberty of*

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Voting in all Church-affairs; and are liable to Church-censures immediately in their own persons. *Paul* knew no such *meer membership* as they set up, who shall by their personal Membership be under the Watch, Discipline, and Censures of the Church, and have their children Baptized, but not partake of other Priviledges together with other adult Members, no offence intervening after their admission to put them under Church-censure, and so to debar them regularly as delinquent Members, from full communion. So that this Text makes nothing for them in the case of Infants, but much against them, in the case of adult persons *meer Membership*. Nor doth that Text in *Deut* 29.11. prove that the *little children* were immediate Members of the Church of Israel so as their Parents were. And though *to be in Covenant, is the* formalis ratio *of a Church-member*; yet it will not thence follow, that every Covenantee doth covenant immediately for himself; nor that every Member of the Church is an immediate Member.

" They say, *To act in Covenant, is but the instrumental means* " *of membership, and yet children are not without this neither. For the act of the Parent (their publick person) is accounted theirs, and they are said to enter into Covenant,* Deut.29.11.12.

Reply. The Parents acting in Covenant for their Infant-seed, hath been before proved to be the *Procreant cause* of the childes Membership: not are the children said to *enter into Covenant*, *Deut.*29.11. otherwise then in and by their Parents Covenant. Yet, as if all they have said were clear, they demand,

" *What is it that children want unto an actual, compleat, proper,* " *absolute, and immediate Membership,* &c? *Is it Covenant-interest,* " *which is the* formalis ratio *of membership? No, they are in Cove-* " *nant. Is it Divine Grant and Donation, which is the Principal* " *Efficient? No; he hath clearly declared himself, by the grant unto* " *the children of his people a portion in his Church, and appoints them* " *to be members thereof. Is it an act of Covenanting, which is the* " *Instrumental Means? No; they have this also relatively, by* " *Divine Appointment, making the Parent a publick person, and* " *accounting them to Covenant in his covenanting.*

Reply. All that they have here expressed, doth not supply

what

what is wanting to little children, to inveſt them with an *actual, compleat, proper, abſolute, and immediate membership.* For, though they are in Covenant, which is the *formalis ratio* of their Membership, yet it is mediately, (i. e. *mediante Parentum fœdere*) and ſo their Membership is mediate. 2. Divine Inſtitution grants unto the little children of his people ſuch a portion in his Church as they are capable of, during their minority, and appoints them to be ſuch Members, as ſuch covenanting of Parents for them can make them. 3. This Divine Inſtitution makes their Parents Undertakers for ſuch children, and them bound, by their Parents acting, to perform that Covenant, when they ſhall become capable, and when they grow fit, to covenant with the Lord and his people for themſelves and theirs, and ſo to be regularly, in their own perſons, by their perſonal act, immediate Members. So that there is wanting unto children in minority, *to make them actual, compleat, proper, abſolute, and immediate Members,* A perſonal fitneſs in themſelves, to act in orderly covenanting for themſelves, which is required in all adult perſons unto immediate Membership. When one comes to be in Covenant in one way, and other in another way; though both are in Covenant, yet theſe different wayes makes their being in the Covenant different, and ſo their Membership. He that comes to be in the Covenant by his own immediate acting, is an immediate Member: He that comes into it by anothers acting for him, is a mediate Member. For, though we are as truly, perſonally, and immediately Members of the Body of faln Mankinde, and by Nature Heirs of Condemnation, as *Adam* was, though he came to it by his own perſonal act, and we by the act of our publick perſon; yet that doth not ſuit the caſe of Infants in queſtion: for, 1. *Adam* ſtood as a publick perſon, in whoſe loyns all Mankinde were under the firſt Covenant, and to be happy or condemned, by his ſtanding or falling. No Parent is ſuch a publick perſon covenanting for all his Poſterity, but for his Infants, and children in minority, while they are ſuch, leaving his adult children to Covenant for themſelves, if he hath any ſuch children, when himſelf enters into Covenant. 2. *Adams* Covenant was onely with the Lord, not with any Church, as the Co-

venant

venant of co. federate Parents is; and therefore, if *Adam* had ſtood, his poſterity had not been Church-members thereby, as the infants of Church-confederates. 3. Nor doth the Parents breaking his Covenant, make his children Heirs of Condemnation, as *Adams* did all Mankinde. So that this example of *Adam* is impertinently produced in this caſe of infants, and their Parents confederating for them, not as their publick perſon, but as Undertakers for their infant-ſeed by Gods Inſtitution. Nor indeed is any to be accounted a publick perſon, as *Adam* was, but Jeſus Chriſt, for all that are in him, *Rom.*5. 14, to 20. Nor doth their ſimilitude of *a Prince giving Lands to a man and his heirs ſucceſſively, while they continue loyal*, ſuit the caſe in queſtion, concerning Infants, who cannot be viſibly diſloyal; nor that, concerning adult perſons not regularly joyned to the Church, as immediate Members, whoſe Parents were godly when they covenanted for them in their infancy. For, they have cut off the Entail of the Covenant from themſelves and their Poſterity, by their perſonal diſloyalty: ſo that nothing is given to them and theirs by their Covenant which they preſume to uſurp, without warrant from God. They ſay true, that " *A member is one, who, according to* " *Rule* (*or according to divine Inſtitution*) *is within the viſible Church*: But that refutes nothing that I have ſaid, concerning mediate and immediate Members; for both are within the Church according to Rule and Divine Inſtitution, though both have not full communion with the Church in all Ordinances, which is the priviledge of all adult perſons, who are immediate Members by their own perſonal right, 1 *Cor.*5.12. They frame an Objection thus:

" Obj. *If children be compleat and immediate members, as their* " *Parents are, then they ſhall immediately have all Church-priviledges* " *as their Parents have, without any further act or qualification.* And they Anſwer it thus: " Anſ. *It followeth not. All priviledges that* " *belong to members, as ſuch, do belong to the children as well as to the* " *parents: But all Church-priviledges do not ſo. A member, as ſuch,* " *(or all members) may not partake of all priviledges, but they are to* " *make progreſs, both in memberly duties and priviledges, as their age,* " *and capacity, and qualifications do fit them for the ſame.*

Reply. The intendment of the Objection (as I apprehend) is to

 ſhew,

ſhew, that compleat and immediate Membership, as ſuch, doth infer compleat and immediate communion in all Church-priviledges: But children in minority have not compleat and immediate communion in all Church-priviledges without ſome further act or qualification: Therefore ſuch children are not compleat and immediate Members, as ſuch. Now to this, their Anſwer is inſufficient: For, the beſt Members have need to make progreſs in memberly duties and qualifications, to fit them more and more for Church-priviledges. Yet all have that communion that ſuits their Membership: *Infants*, in Baptiſm, the Watch, Prayers, and Bleſſing of the Church, by their Parents covenanting for them: *Adult perſons, orderly and regularly joyned by their perſonal covenanting for themſelves*, in the Seals, Voting, and Cenſures, which belong to them, as ſuch Members. Nor doth the Scripture any where allow the Church to admit any one by perſonal covenanting for themſelves and theirs, into any other Membership then compleat and immediate. But Infants are not capable of ſuch Membership, without ſome further perſonal act and qualification, when they ſhall become adult. Therefore their Infant-membership is not compleat and immediate.

" 3. *That their Membership ſtill continues in adult age, and ceaſeth* " *not with their Infancy, appears,* 1. *Becauſe in Scripture perſons are* " *broken off onely for notorious ſins, or incorrigible impenitency and* " *unbelief, not for growing up to adult age,* Rom. 11.20.

Reply. 1. When I affirm, that their mediate Membership continueth during their minority, while they are under the Inſtitution and Government of Parents, *&c.* I deny that that Membership continues in adult age, and when they are at their own diſpoſal, or have children of their own to covenant for: becauſe then the reaſon of their *mediate Membership* ceaſeth, they being by age capable of covenanting for themſelves. 2. Their firſt Reaſon doth not prove, that the Membership of all baptized in Infancy, continues in adult age: For the Text alledged ſpeaketh onely of ſuch as have been received into compleat and immediate membership regularly, by their perſonal Faith and Covenanting with the Church viſibly, who are broken off, either by the juſt judgement of God, as the unbelieving Nation of the Jews are, or by the

juſt

juſt Cenſure of the Church. Whereas our queſtion is, not of ſuch, but of adult perſons, that break off themſelves from the Covenant, by profaue neglect, or contempt of the Ordinances, or unſuitable Converſation. Who ever ſaid, that any were broken off for growing up to adult age? Such intimations ſhould be forborn by godly men.

" 2. *The Jews children circumciſed did not ceaſe to be members by* " *growing up, but continued in the Church, and were by virtue of their* " *memberſhip received in infancy, bound unto various duties, and in* " *ſpecial unto thoſe ſolemn profeſſions that pertained unto adult mem-* " *bers, not as then entring into a new memberſhip, but as making pro-* " *greſs in memberly duties,* Deut. 26. 2---10. & 16.16,17. with " Gal. 5. 3.

Reply. 1. That the Jews children circumciſed were bound to various duties, and to *thoſe ſolemn profeſſions that pertained to adult members*, when themſelves were grown up, is clear enough by the Texts alledged, and ſundry other. Whereunto I willingly adde, that *Baptiſm alſo bindeth the Infant-ſeed of Confederates to various Goſpel-duties, and eſpecially this, of uſing all means that Faith may be wrought in their hearts, unto obeying the Call of God, and then holding forth their Faith unto the Church, that they may take hold of the Covenant for themſelves and theirs, and ſo become compleat and immediate Members.* But 2. It is not proved, by thoſe Texts, that when they were adult, they did not enter into a new Memberſhip; rather the contrary appears in *Deut.*26.17,18. For, they entred into that Covenant perſonally and immediately, not in and by their Parents, as they did in Infancy, *Gen.*17.7. If covenanting be *the Form of Church-memberſhip*, (which they affirm) then a different form of covenanting, makes a different kinde of Church-memberſhip. *Immediate covenanting*, makes immediate Members; *Mediate covenanting*, makes mediate Members.

Their third Reaſon is, " *Thoſe relations of Born-ſervants and* " *Subjects, which the Scripture makes uſe of to ſet forth the ſtate of* " *children in the Church by,* Lev.25.41,42. Ezek.37.25. *do not (as* " *all men know) ceaſe with infancy, but continue in adult age. Whence* " *alſo it follows, that one ſpecial end of memberſhip received in infancy,* " *is to leave perſons under engagement, to ſervice and ſubjection to*

" *Christ in his Church, when grown up, when they are fit for it, and* " *have most need of it.*

Reply. 1. Those Relations of born Servants and Subjects in the Text alledged, have different respects. That *Lev.* 25. was typical, figuring the time of Grace, whereby now Christ hath freed us from the servitude of Sin and Satan, *Joh.* 8.32,36. *Rom.* 6.14,18. to become the Servants of God in Christ, *Rom.* 6.22. 1 *Cor.* 7.23. Parents and children, so far as they have interest in the Redemption wrought by Christ, as they are freed by him from other Lord, so they are bound thereby to *serve him all the dayes of their life*, Luke 1.74,75. Therefore this relation doth not cease with infancy, but continueth in adult age. But this doth nothing concern the thing in question, concerning *Mediate Membership*. The other Text, in *Ezek.* 37.25. is a Prophecy of the calling of the Elect Nation of the Jews, and of the state of the Church under the *New Jerusalem*; the difference between which, and the Christian Gentiles now, I have formerly shewn: so that neither doth that fit the question. But 2. I grant, (though not as following thence) *That one special end of membership received in infancy, is to leave persons under engagement, to service and subjection to Christ in his Church, when grown up, when they are fittest for it, and have most need of it.* The engagement is strong, both on the Parents, *To train up their children*, from their Infancy, *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, Eph. 6.4. and upon the Children, *To know the God of their Parents, and to serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing minde*, 1 Chron. 28.9. and upon the Church, *To exercise their Watchfulness, that both Parents and Children do their duty, helping them also therein with their Instructions, and Prayers, and Power, which is given for Edification, as the case may require.* Yet, when all this is done, neither can the Parents nor the Church give Grace unto the Children, that, when they become adult, they may be spiritually fit for personal and immediate Membership; and to bring them into it without such fitness visibly, is to profane the Ordinances, and to pollute the Lords Sanctuary.

" Reas. 4. *There is no ordinary way of cessation of membership, but by Death, Dismission, Excommunication, or Dissolution of the Society: none of which is the case of the persons in question.*

Reply.

Reply. This enumeration is insufficient; there is another ordinary way of cessation of Membership, *i. e. Desertion.* Thus *Esau's* Membership ceased, and so may the Membership of others, though they abide in the place where the Church is; yet, if being adult, they regard not to joyn with the Church by their personal and immediate Confederation, nor to fit themselves for it, these despise the Church of God. And, if that is sufficient to deprive those of all Church priviledges who were before in personal and immediate Church fellowship when they forsake it. 1 *Joh.* 2. 19 much more those who never had such Membership, nor have approved their Spiritualness for it, to the Churches charitable judgement, nor truly desire and endavour so to do. What can the mediate Membership, which such had in Infancy, advantage them for continuing thereby still in Membership, when being adult, they live in the breach of that Covenant, whereby they were left under engagement in their Infancy unto service and subjection to Christ in the Church?

" Real. 5. *Either they are when adult, Members, or Non-*
" *members; if Non-members, then a person admited a Member*
" *and sealed by Baptism, not cast out, nor deserving to be, may (the*
" *Church whereof he was, still remaining) become a Non-member, and*
" *out of the Church, and of the unclean world, which the Scripture*
" *acknowledgeth not.*

Reply. A Freemans childe (suppose of *London*, or any other Corporation) was free-born, and might, in his minority, trade under his father; yet, being grown up, he must personally enter into the common Engagement of Freemen, and be accepted of the Company, as his father was, unto all Duties and Liberties of that Society in his own person; else he may not trade for himself. If it be said, Why so? either he is a Freeman, or a Non-freeman. It will be readily answered, *He is a Non-freeman, and that by his own default.* If it be said, He was Free by his Fathers Copy, and is not dis-franchised by any publick Censure, nor hath deserved so to be; may such an one (the Society whereof he was, still remaining) become a Non-freeman, and out of that Society, *&c?* The answer will easily and readily be given, *He hath lost his Freedome, by not entring, in his own person, into the common*

Engagement of Freemen, to the Duties whereunto all Freemen are perſonally bound. So, and much more juſtly it is in this caſe. An adult perſon makes himſelf to become a Non-member, as to priviledges, by not performing the Duties whereunto he was bound by his Parents Covenant for him in his minority, and by his not regularly covenanting, as his Parents did. And this is according to Scripture, which tells us, that Circumciſion received in Baptiſm may become, by his own fault, being adult, no Circumciſion, *Rom.*2.25. Thoſe Texts in *Rom.*11.16. 1 *Cor.*7.14 *Gen.*17.7. are not applicable to the adult perſons in queſtion, but onely to Infants, and Children in minority.

" Propoſ. 6. *Such Church-members, who, either by death, or*
" *ſome other extraordinary Providence, have been inevitably*
" *hindred from publick acting, as aforeſaid, yet, having given*
" *the Church cauſe, in judgement of charity, to look at them*
" *as ſo qualified, and ſuch as had they been called thereunto,*
" *would ſo have acted, their children are to be baptized.*

Reply. This Propoſition may not be granted. For, 1. It granteth the priviledge of Church-memberſhip to ſuch as are *not actually and regularly Church-members*, which is contrary to Chriſts Ordinance, whereby Baptiſm, being a publick Church-Ordinance, is due onely to them who have a publick ſtate and Intereſt, ſuch are onely the Members of the publick Eccleſiaſtical Body, the Church. Hence 1. An ordinary Miniſter cannot orderly perform an act proper to his Office, in reference to Church-communion, to any that are not regularly and actually Members of the viſible Church, without great uſurpation: as, if a man do a work proper to Magiſtracy, to one that is not under his Magiſtratical Power, he is an Uſurper. So it is in this caſe of a Miniſter. To adminiſter Baptiſm, is an act of his Office-power: If he adminiſter Baptiſm to children, whoſe Parents are not regularly in Church-order; in ſo doing, why may not the Lord ſay, He is an Uſurper? Suppoſe an unbaptized perſon, profeſſing his Faith, and qualified according to the deſcription in the ſixth Propoſition; yet deferring, for ſome probable cauſes, to adjoyn himſelf to the Church, for the preſent, ſhould deſire Baptiſm of any of theſe Miniſters who framed this Propoſition; Should they adminiſter

it to him, and ſo do a proper work of their Office upon him? If yea; if they admit him to Baptiſm, why not to the Lords Supper, and to the choice of Officers, and to the Cenſures of the Church, either actively or paſſively? for all theſe are Actions and Ordinances of one general nature: and it is meerly his want of Church-order that debars him from them. 2. The Church may not receive into any priviledge of Church-communion, ſuch as Baptiſm is, (whatever cauſe they ſeem to have, in the judgement of charity, to think them fit for Church-membership, *and ſuch as had they been called, would have ſo acted*) until they be actually in publick Church-order; no more then the children of every good Subject of the King, may be admitted into the ſpecial Prerogatives of a Corporation, whereof themſelves, or their next Parents are not regularly free. *All things muſt be done in order*, 1 *Cor.* 14. 40. whereunto, what is more contrary, then that he, who is not regularly and perſonally of a publick Society, ſhould have Fellowſhip in a publick Priviledge, proper to that Society? Yet they ſay *this*, which the Propoſition holds forth, *is manifeſt*:

" 1. *Becauſe the main foundation of the right of the childe to priviledge, remains*; viz. *Gods Inſtitution: and the force of his Covenant carrying it to the generations of ſuch as are keepers of the Covenant*, i. e. *not viſible breakers of it*, &c.

Reply. The Parents of the children in queſtion are viſibly breakers of the Covenant, which was ſealed to them by Baptiſm, in their Infancy, and obliged them to ſervice and ſubjection to Chriſt in his viſible Church, having confederated perſonally and regularly for themſelves and theirs, as their Parents did before them. If they do not this, they are out of that order, by their own fault, wherein they might have given their children right to Baptiſm, according to Chriſts Inſtitution. That right which Parents have not for themſelves unto *Baptiſm* if they were unbaptized, they cannot give to their children. They who are not Members in their own perſonal and immediate right, cannot give a right of membership to their children. And though their Membership in Infancy was diſtinct from their Parents, yet being onely mediate, by their Parents covenanting for them, it ceaſeth, when they become adult, by their own fault, in that they were not orderly

derly joyned to the Church, immediately, by their personal covenanting for themselves and theirs, regularly.

" 2. *Because Parents not doing what is required in the fifth Pro-*
" *position, is through want of opportunity; which is not to be imputed*
" *as their guilt, so as to be a barre of the Childes priviledge.*

Reply. 1. It hath been already proved, in our examining the *fifth Proposition*, that more is required to fit one that is adult, for Church-membership, then is there expressed, *viz. Faith in Christ made visible to the Church*, without which they are not regularly Church-members. Now Baptism administred by ordinary Church-Officers, to such as are out of Church-order, is profaned, as Circumcision was by the *Shechemites*, and would have been by the *Ishmaelites*, and *Edomites*, and the posterity of *Abraham* by *Keturah*, if it had been administred to their children, when their Parents were not joyned to the Church of God, or abode not in it, in the Families of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*. For, 1. One end of Baptism now, (as it was of Circumcision then) is to seal Church-communion, 1 *Cor.* 12. 13. it is a publick Testimony of the Admission of the party baptized into the Family of God, *The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*, into whose Name he is baptized, *Mat.* 28. 20. either immediately, if he be adult, by his personal Covenanting for himself and his seed; or mediately, if in his minority, by his next immediate Parents Covenanting for him. This the Parent in question hath not done. Hence the want hereof is a bar to his childes Baptism. 2. The regular and lawful use of Baptism now (as of Circumcision of old) presupposeth both Gods Promise, and his Faith, who is to use it, either upon himself, or upon his Infant. Therefore he that presumeth to use it, being not so qualified visibly, (*viz.* not having before the Promise of Christ, and Faith for Justification with *Abraham*) doth he not treacherously usurp the Great-Seal of the King of Heaven and Earth? If not, surely it had need to be soundly cleared.

" 3. *God reckoneth that as done in his service, to which there*
" *was a manifest desire and endeavour, albeit the acting of it be hin-*
" *dred*, &c

Reply. We must distinguish between private and publick Service in a publick state and order. 1. In private Service, God accepts

accepts the will for the deed, when the acting of it is hindred, either by God himself, as *Abrahams* sacrificing his Son, and *Davids* building the Temple; or by the parties inability to do so much as he would, as in that case 2 *Cor.* 8. 12. and the like. 2. But in publick Service in a publick state and order, he doth not accept of that as done which is not done, so far as to bring them into that state and order, whatsoever their desires and endeavours have been; for this were to overthrow and subvert that Order, which God hath by his Institution established, and to bring in Confusion. Will God accept a man in doing acts of Office-power proper to a Minister of a Church, because he desired and endeavoured to be a Minister, when he is not actually and regularly in Office? Or may a Church receive unto Fellowship of the outward Seals of the Covenant, such as are not actually and regularly joyned to the Church, because they desired and endeavoured to be of the Church, albeit their joyning with the Church was hindred? To be baptized, *in voto*, will nothing advantage any to Church-fellowship, though a Martyr, *in voto*, is accepted of God as a Martyr, because though God searcheth and knoweth the heart, yet the Church doth not: *De occultis non judicat Ecclesia*; secret things belong to God, but revealed things to men, and things are not manifested to the Church, otherwise then by congruous actings: nor, in this case, can they or theirs have a right to Church-priviledges, otherwise then by actual joyning with the Church.

" 4. *The terms of the Proposition import that in charity, that is* " *here done interpretatively, which is mentioned to be done in the fifth* " *Proposition expresly.*

Reply. 1. It's an unwarrantable charity that makes such an interpretation; for it is without warrant of any Rule in Scripture, or in good Reason. 2. If that which is mentioned to be done in the fifth Proposition expresly, is here done interpretatively, both being put together, will not avail to put the Parent regularly into Church-fellowship, in any sense, and to give his Infant a right to Baptism thereby. For, by Christs Ordinance, onely adult persons, who have true Faith in Him, and Holiness, are adult Members of the invisible Church, and the same persons, making holy Profession thereof outwardly in the order of him appointed,

may be Members of the visible Church; and they onely can give their Infant-seed a right unto Baptism. For, seeing *without faith it is impossible to please God*, in matters of his publick Worship and Service, whereof Baptism is one; and seeing God hath appointed us to Worship him, both in it, and in all other publick Duties and Services, so as we may please him therein: It followeth necessarily, that he requireth true visible Faith in all whom he priviledgeth to baptize their Infants, which yet is not expresly required in the fifth Proposition, nor interpretatively in this.

" Propos. 7. *The Members of Orthodox Churches, being found*
" *in the Faith, and not scandalous in life, and presenting due*
" *testimony thereof, these occasionally coming from one Church*
" *to another, may have their children baptized in the Church*
" *whither they come, by virtue of Communion of Churches:*
" *But if they remove their habitation, they ought orderly to Co-*
" *venant, and to submit themselves to the Government of Christ*
" *in the Church where they settle their abode, and so their chil-*
" *dren to be baptized: It being the Churches duty to receive such*
" *into communion, so far as they are regularly fit for the same.*

Reply. The regular Communion of approved Churches, I look at as the Ordinance of Christ, according to the 11th and 12th Positions premised: but this Proposition is so ambiguously expressed, that it leaves me in the dark, till some Questions be answered, that the extent and compass of the sense and meaning of it may be better cleared. They distribute it into two parts, which they endeavour to prove severally: but neither of them are sufficiently explained. In the first part, I Enquire; *What Churches they account Orthodox?* whether such onely as have the Truth of Doctrine, as it is opposed to Heterodoxies and Errours about the Doctrine of Faith, *viz.* Churches that are Heretical; or such also which are right in Judgement and Practice in matters of Church-Order. For both these the Church at *Colosse* was praised by *Paul*, in *Col.* 2,5,6. 2. *What course the Church, where the Members of such Churches desire to have their children baptized, do take to know that such Members are found in the Faith?* For a Member of an Orthodox Church may hold and maintain dangerous Errours, contrary to the Faith, 1 *Cor.* 15. 12. 3. *Whom they*

they account to be not ſcandalous in life? whether onely ſuch as fall not under the cenſure of Civil Courts, or alſo ſuch as are juſtly offenſive to Gods People by their ſinful and diſorderly walking? For they ſay, in their proof of the ſecond part of this Propoſition, that, *to adminiſter Baptiſm to ſuch as walk in diſorder, would be to adminiſter Chriſts Ordinance to ſuch as are in a way of ſin and diſorder, which ought not to be done,* 2 Theſſ. 3.6. 1 Chron 15.13. *and would be contrary to that Rule,* 1 Cor. 14.40. 4. *What they account due Teſtimony?* whether that which is given of them by the Church, from whence they come, or onely that which they may have from ſome in the place where they live, and have been but a little while, whether they be Members of the Church or not? 5. What they mean by their *occaſionally coming from one Church to another?* whether they take a due courſe to know that their occaſion of coming be approved by the Church whence they come, or not? 6. When they ſay, *They may have their children baptized in the Church whither they come, by virtue of the Communion of Churches?* Quære; 1. Whether they have Letters of Recommendation from the Church whence they come, whereby that Church deſireth this fruit of Communion with the Church where they would have their children baptized, or not? That being the orderly way of exerciſing Communion among Churches, *Rom.* 16. 1,2. 2 *Cor.* 3. 1. 3 *Joh.* ver. 9,12. and, Whether the Infant muſt be baptized as a Member (in and by his Parents covenanting for him) of that Church, whence his Parents come, or as a Member of the Church where he is baptized, and where the Parent is not a Member, but onely hath this benefit of the Communion of Churches, that himſelf is admitted to the Lords Supper, *pro tempore,* and his children to Baptiſm in a tranſient way? When theſe and the like Queſtions are Anſwered, I ſhall better know what to ſay to the firſt part of the Propoſition, then now I do. In the mean time, to the firſt Proof thereof I have already ſpoken in my Replies to *Propoſ.* 1. & 2. & 5. & 8.

2. To clear their meaning in the ſecond part of this Propoſition: *Quære;* 1. Whether ſuch Removers have an orderly diſmiſſion from the Church whence they come, or not? 2. Whether the Church where they ſettle their abode, do ſubject themſelves

selves to the Government of Christ, or not? 3. Whether all refusing to Covenant with any Church whatsoever, where they are necessitated to settle their abode, is to be judged to be disorderly walking, and to savour of Profaneness and Separation? 4. Whether if the Church in that place refuse to receive them into communion, so far as they are regularly fit for the same, or if they do not joyn in communion with that Church in the place where they dwelt, it being not to be approved; Doth this their not being joyned, debar their children from being baptized in another Church that is approved? These, and the like Questions, being clearly Answered, I shall understand the true and full sense of this Proposition, and what to say to it. So much may suffice, for the present, for Reply to their Answer to the first Question.

"Quest. II. *Whether according to the Word of God, there ought "to be a Consociation of Churches? and what should be the "manner of it?*

"Answ. *The Answer may be given in the Propositions following.*

Reply. The Propositions following are eight. As for the first four: The first, Concerning *the full Power and Authority Ecclesiastical, within it self, of each particular Congregation of visible Saints, in Gospel-Order, furnished, at least, with a Teaching Elder, and walking together in Truth and Peace.* And the second, concerning *The Sisterly Relation of the Churches of Christ each to other.* And the third, concerning *The Union and Communion of such Churches.* And the fourth, concerning *The Acts of Communion*; I fully close with, as well agreeing with the 11th and 12th Positions premised. Excepting onely the sixth *Act of Communion*, and that, but in one part of it. For, *To admonish one another, when there is need and cause for it*, I confess is an Act of this Communion, and which may be proved from *Gal.*2. 11,24. by proportion. But, for that other part of it, *To withdraw from a Church, or peccant party therein, after due means, with patience used, obstinately persisting in Errours or Scandals*; this must be taken with a grain of Salt. They referre us to the *Platform of Discipline*, (Chap. 15. Sect. 2. Partic. 3.) where they fetch a proof for this withdrawing, from

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Mat. 18. 15, 16, 17. by proportion. But there seems to be a threefold disproportion between that and this. For, 1. There the *Withdrawing* is a consequent and effect of the Churches authoritative Censure of an obstinate offender after the first, and second, and third Admonition, the offender being a Member, and so under the Power and Authority of the Church, and to be so censured by the Church, to whom Christ hath given *the Keyes of the Kingdome of Heaven*, and hath ordained, that such an one shall be Excommunicated for his obstinacy in offences, which were materially of a lesser kinde, but, by obstinacy of the delinquent, (after secret, private, and publick Admonition) against the Ordinance of Christ for his reclaiming, becomes formally an heinous Scandal. But the *Withdrawing of other Churches from a Church which they account peccant*, is an act of different nature and kinde. For, it is not an act of publick Authority of such Churches over that Church, by virtue of *the Keyes of the Kingdome of Heaven* given to any Synod, or Council of Neighbour-Churches, as they themselves confess in their first Propesition, for Answer to this second Question.

2. The steps, whereby they proceed to this *Withdrawing*, are, "1. *That one Church Admonish another.* 2. *If the Church under* "*offence, doth not hearken to that Admonition; the offended Church is* "*to acquaint other Neighbour-Churches with that offence, and with* "*their neglect of that Admonition: whereunto those other Churches* "*are to joyn, in seconding the Admonition formerly given: and if* "*still the offending Church continue in obstinacy and impenitency, they* "*may forbear communion with them.*

Reply. This is not, by proportion, according to *Matth.* 18. For, there Christ doth not allow them, who have proceeded in Admonishing, but to the second step, to forbear communion with the delinquent: whereas these Neighbour-Churches are but in the second step. *Yet*, they say, *they may forbear communion with them.* Then they ascend to the third step; "*To proceed to make use of a* "*Synod, or Council of Neighbour-Churches walking orderly (if a* "*greater cannot conveniently be had) for their conviction. If they* "*hear not the Synod, the Synod, having declared them to be Obstinate,* "*particular Churches, approving and accepting the judgement of the*

"*Synod, are to declare the ſentence of Non-communion reſpectively*
"*concerning them; and thereupon, out of a Religious care to keep their*
"*own communion pure, they may juſtly withdraw themſelves from*
"*participation with them at the Lords Table, and from ſuch other acts*
"*of holy communion, as the Communion of Churches doth otherwiſe*
"*allow and require.* Thus they ſpeak, in that *Platform*. But, is this, in proportion, according to *Mat.*18. that *the Neighbour-Churches may firſt withdraw, and then a Synod or Council of Neighbour-Churches muſt be made uſe of for their conviction?* and, *if the Synod declare them to be Obſtinate, particular Churches are to declare the ſentence of Non-communion, and then to withdraw themſelves from all acts of holy communion?* Till they can produce a clear Rule for warrant of ſuch a proceeding, I cannot look at this otherwiſe, then as a meer humane Invention.

3. Though Churches may *withdraw from a Church that is obſtinate and impenitent* in ſome caſes, (without any ſuch *ſolemn ſentence of Non-communion declared by a Synod*) yet, not for ſuch cauſes as a delinquent Brother may be Excommunicated by a Church, according to *Mat.*18. For there, though the Offence was in ſome leſſer matter, and private between two at firſt; yet, by obſtinacy againſt convincing light, held forth in thoſe three ſteps of proceeding, it becomes a publick and heinous Scandal, and ſo the Delinquent muſt be at laſt Excommunicated by the command of Chriſt, and the Sentence of the Church, in obedience to Chriſt, who hath for ſuch ends *given the Keyes of the Kingdome of Heaven unto them.* But Neighbour-Churches may not withdraw from a true Church for every *Errour* and *Scandal*, though perſiſted in, and, in their opinion, obſtinately. For 1. It may be the *Errour* of Neighbour-Churches, to think that to be light from Scripture, which they hold forth for their conviction, when it is not from Scripture, rightly underſtood, and rightly applied If the Synod, by whom this Book is publiſhed, ſhould conclude any Church to walk in *Errour*, and *Scandal*, and *Obſtinately*, which ſhall not be convinced from what light they have here held forth, nor practiſe accordingly, till what is Replied *ad oppoſitum*, be ſoundly Refuted, and their Allegations and Applications of Scripture, more convincingly and irrefragably cleared, and *Withdraw*

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communion from them, after the first, second, and third Admonition; and, If any Neighbour-Churches, for this or the like cause, should *Withdraw* from communion with them, after the Admonition of one Church, and, after that, of other Neighbour-Churches; They should greatly sin in so doing, and act contrary to their own Doctrine in their second Proof of their 7th Proposition for Answer to this second Question, *pag.* 28. where they say, *To refuse communion with a true Church, in lawful and pious actions, is unlawful, and justly accounted Schismatical. For, if the Church be true, Christ holdeth some communion with it; therefore so must we.* Now the Churches in *New-England* were approved by their Neighbour-Churches to be true Churches, by their giving unto them the right hand of fellowship: and an Errour in lesser matters, though persisted in against their Admonitions, (which may be from want of convincing light) doth not make any of them cease to be a true Church. But to *Withdraw* themselves from all holy communion with such a Church for such a cause, is *Total separation from a true Church, which*, themselves say, *is unlawful*, Ibid. 2. The cases, wherein communion may be regularly *Withdrawn* from a Church or Person, are onely such as Subvert the Fundamentals of Religion, and are obstinately persisted in, against due means regularly used with patience for their conviction, being contrary to the *Faith once given to the Saints*; from whence they may be justly denominated *Heretical*, Tit. 3. 10, 11. 2 Joh. *ver.* 10, 11. Or to the *communion of Saints*; from whence they may be justly styled *Schismatical*, Rom. 16. 17, 18. Or to both, *being fallen from the Truth once received*; from whence they be justly called *Apostatical*, 2 Tim 4. 10. Or, if there be any other case of like heinousness. But in cases of lesser importance, Churches and Christians are to be exhorted to *walk worthy of their calling, with all lowliness, and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love: Endevouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*, &c *Eph.* 4. 1, 2, 3, &c. concluding with blessed *Paul*, that (the main things of Religion being provided for, and secured, for lesser matters) *if in any thing ye be otherwise minded; God shall reveal even this unto you*, Phil. 3. 15. For, in such matters, godly men do frequently differ, and are not easily convinced; some from the

the ſtrength, others from the weakneſs of their Intellectuals: and the beſt know but in part.

I have been the larger in clearing this Point for neceſſary cauſes. Having thus ſpoken to the four firſt Propoſitions, I proceed to the fifth and ſixth Propoſitions.

"Propoſ. 5. *Conſociation of Churches, is their mutual and ſo-*
"*lemn Agreement to exerciſe communion in ſuch acts as aforeſaid, a-*
"*mong themſelves, with ſpecial reference to thoſe Churches, which by*
"*Providence are planted in a convenient vicinity, though with liberty*
"*reſerved, without offence, to make uſe of others, as the nature of the*
"*caſe, or the advantage of the opportunity, may lead thereunto.*

"Propoſ. 6. *The Churches of Chriſt in this Country, having ſo*
"*good opportunity for it, it is meet to be commended to them as their*
"*duty thus to conſociate: For,* 1. *Communion of Churches being*
"*commanded, and Conſociation being an Agreement to Practiſe it,*
"*this muſt needs be a Duty alſo,* Pſal. 119. 106. Neh. 10 28, 29.

Reply. Before I proceed to argue upon theſe Propoſitions, ſome things ſhould be premiſed, in way of Enquiry, that the terms may be rightly underſtood. *Quære.* Whether by mutual and ſolemn Agreement, they mean a Vow? It ſeems by the Texts alledged by them, in the firſt Proof of the ſixth Propoſition, that they mean ſo; and therefore I ſhall take it for granted that that is their meaning. 2. When they ſay, *This ſolemn Agreement or Covenant muſt be made with ſpecial reference to Churches in vicinity:* *Quære.* 1. How many Churches in Vicinity or Neighbour-Churches, muſt thus Covenant together? 2. Whether they muſt have ſet times of Meeting for this purpoſe? and who are to meet? Whether Elders alone? or others alſo ſent from the Churches with them? and how frequent theſe Meetings muſt be? and whether the ſet times muſt be kept conſtantly, though they have no preſent need of counſel from another? 3. Whereas they ſpeak of *Liberty reſerved, without offence, to make uſe of others, as the nature of the caſe,* &c. *may lead thereunto.* *Quære.* How they may avoid giving offence to Neighbour-Churches, if they uſe the help of Churches more remote? Whether they muſt have their conſent thereunto before they uſe them? 4. Concerning the end and iſſue of this Conſociation of Churches; Whether

ther they are bound thereby to acquiesce in the judgement and determinations of those Neighbour-Churches, and to practise accordingly, whether they see convincing light in the Scriptures, or Arguments propounded to them, or not, under a Penalty of being judged by the rest to be *Obstinate in Errour and Scandal*, and accordingly in time to have all *holy communion with them withdrawn from them?* It seemeth, by what was before said in the sixth *Act of Communion* for Answer to the first Question, *pag.* 31. that this will be the end and issue of this Consociation unto any Church that shall dissent from the rest. This Consociation they endeavour to prove to be a duty incumbent upon the Churches in *New-England*. I shall briefly weigh their Reasons.

" *For* 1. *Communion of Churches being commanded, and Consoc-*
" *ciation being but an Agreement to practise it, this must needs be a*
" *duty also*, Psal. 119. 106. Nehem. 10. 28, 29.

Reply. It doth not necessarily follow, till they have proved that Consociation of Churches by a mutual and solemn Covenant is commanded, as Communion of Churches is. Nor do the Texts alledged prove it in *Psal.* 119. 106. *David* swore *to keep Gods righteous judgements*, and would *perform it*; because, though he was not bound to swear, yet he had voluntarily sworn it, and so was under a double bond to perform it: for, both his *keeping Gods righteous judgements*, and his *performing that Vow*, were commanded of God, *Deut.* 10. 13. with *Psal.* 76. 11. 2. And his Vow was private, betwixt God and himself. Hence it will not follow, that Churches are bound to consociate with a Vow or Covenant, after the manner here described, which is not proved to be a duty, and may be unsafe for particular Churches. That Covenant, in *Neh.* 10. 28, 29. was their Church-covenant renewed and explained, and so was a mutual solemn Engagement, by *entring into a Curse, and into an Oath* (to which form we are not bound) and Church-covenanting is Gods Ordinance, *Isa.* 19. 21. & 56. 4, to 8. & 62. 5. all which are Prophesies of the Churches under the Gospel. But between the covenanting of a Church within it self, and such a covenanting as this for the consociating of Churches, there are considerable differences. 1. *Because this wants Warrant from the Scripture, which that hath; there being neither any Precept in Scri-*

pture commanding it, nor any Pattern among the Primitive Churches, planted or approved by the Apostles, commanding it unto us. 2. *Nor is there like Reason for such Consociation of Churches by a mutual and solemn Agreement or Covenant between Churches in a vicinity, as is for a Church-covenant within it self.* For, the Church-covenant is necessary, because, without it, the ends of Church-fellowship cannot be attained. For, 1. Each particular Church is a Spiritual Corporation; which therefore must receive its being from a Spiritual Combination, or Foederal Engagement. 2. By virtue hereof, they that had no natural impression to subject them to others, or to give them power over them, have mutual power each over other, to command, & constrain, as the case requires; of which power they could not have been made partakers without mutual Agreement and Engagement. 3. Hereby they come to enjoy such Spiritual and Ecclesiastick Priviledges unto which none can be admitted without the approbation and allowance of the whole; which necessarily requires this Engagement to the whole, which is by Covenant. Thus Mr. *Hooker* argues, to prove *the necessity of a Church-covenant*, Survey, *part.* 1. *chap.* 4. *p.* 50, to 55. But the ends of *Church-communion*, (which is mutual helpfulness by counsel) may be attained (without such a Consociation by mutual Engagement) *by the Communion of Churches*, which of it self, without any other Engagement, gives Churches a right and interest in another way mutually for their help by counsel, when their needs require it. The Churches in *New-England* have, by the blessing of Christ, found the benefit of the Communion of Churches for setling Truth and Peace among them, without such a *Consociation*, and may so still. 3. Such an *Agreement between Churches* will become a Snare unto them, by straitning them in the use and exercise of their Church-power within themselves, *in re propria*. 1. If, by virtue hereof, they may not administer Church-censures within themselves, without concurrence of Neighbour-Churches, or Elders approbation sought and attained thereunto before: Or, 2. If thereby they stand bound under the fore-noted Penalty, to rest in, and practise according to the judgement and advice of such Churches, having sufficient light and consent within themselves without them. 3. Mr. *Rutherfurd* affirms, *That a conve-*

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nient number of Churches, having ordinarily converſing one with another, ſhall voluntarily combine themſelves in one Society; this laſt gives in the formality of Claſſical Membership, Lib. 2. p. 320. He addes: *When God hath made him a combined Member, now, by inſtitution, of one Presbyterian Church, not of another, though by ordinary converſe with other Churches, in caſe of ſcandal, his example may prove prejudicial and infeſtuous to others, yet this Presbytery muſt proceed to Excommunication againſt him, becauſe he is combined with them.* Thus, you ſee, by this voluntary combination of Churches, a Church become a Claſſical or Presbyterian Church, and the Members, by conſenting thereunto, become Members of a Claſſical Church, and under the power of it, ſo as to be Excommunicated by it. And is not this Conſociation to be looked at as a Snare to the Churches? which 1. Transforms them from Congregational Churches into a Claſſical Church? And 2. Subjects them under the Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction of that Claſſical Church? And 3. Without any warrant of Chriſts Inſtitution? Let us ſee if there be more in their ſecond Proof.

" 2. Paul *an Apoſtle ſought with much labour the conference,* " *concurrence, and right hand of fellowſhip of other Apoſtles: and* " *ordinary Elders and Churches have not leſs need each of other, to pre-* " *vent their* running in vain, *Gal.* 2. 2,6,9.

Reply. 1. This neceſſity was proper to *Paul*'s caſe, who did not converſe with Chriſt on earth, as the other Apoſtles did, but was as one *born out of due time,* 1 Cor. 15. 8. and ſo was more liable to be objected and excepted againſt, then the other Apoſtles; and therefore had more need to be countenanced among men, by them, then they by him: Whence he wiſely ſought approbation from them. But this is not the caſe of the Churches in *New-England,* each of them having been approved by *the right hand of fellowſhip* given to them by other Churches at their firſt gathering, and at the Ordination of their Teaching and Ruling-Elders. 2. *Paul* did thus, not by reaſon of ſuch a conſociation of Churches, as is here deſcribed, but for other Reaſons. 3. The *running in vain* of any Elders and Churches, hath been hitherto prevented by *the communion of Churches* regularly exerciſed, and ſtill may be.

" 3. *Those general Rules, touching the need and use of counsel and* " *help in weighty cases, concern all Societies and Polities Ecclesiastical,* " *as well as Civil,* Prov. 11.14. & 15.22, &c.

Reply. It is true, and it is their duty to make use of them, in obedience, and with thankfulness to God, as need requires, when they want light or consent within themselves, by virtue of the *communion of Churches*, without such a Consociation as they describe.

" 4. *The pattern, in* Acts 15. *holds forth a warrant for Coun-* " *cils, which may be greater or lesser, as the matter shall require.*

Reply. But, 1. Not with special respect to the vicinity of Churches: for *Paul* and *Barnabas*, and the Messengers from the Church of *Antioch*, passed through other Churches nearer, to go to *Jerusalem* for counsel. 2. Nor by virtue of such a Consociation of the Church at *Antioch* with that at *Jerusalem*, but of the communion of Churches.

" 5. *Concurrence and communion of Churches, in Gospel-times,* " *is not obscurely held forth in* Isa. 19 23,24,25. Zeph. 3.9 1 Cor. " 11.16. & 14.32,36.

Reply. Some of those Texts note onely a communion of Saints in one and the same Church. 2. None of them hold forth a Consociation of Churches as they describe.

" 6. *There hath constantly been in these Churches a profession of* " *Communion, in giving the right hand of fellowship at the gathering* " *of Churches, and Ordination of Elders; which importeth a Con-* " *sociation, and obligeth to the practice thereof.*

Reply. Together with the *profession of communion*, hath been the practice of it in these Churches. But that this communion importeth such a Consociation, as they describe, and obligation to the practice thereof, was not expressed, nor understood. Worthy Mr. *Cotton*, (whose Name ought to be honourable among the Saints, both in *Old England* and *New*) in that Book which he entituled, *The Way of the Churches in New-England*, the sixth Chapter, speaketh of the Communion of Churches, and sheweth seven wayes, whereby it ought to be, and is, in these Churches, exercised. They do (as I apprehend) reach all the Duties to be performed, by virtue of Church-communion, mutually, by each other: But of this Consociation (as it is here described)

described) he speaketh not a word; nor, I believe, did apprehend any Necessity of it, or Rule in Scripture for it. Therefore, when they say; *Without this, we shall want an expedient and sufficient cure for emergent Church-difficulties and differences*; the constant experience of these Churches, from their beginning, to this day, evinceth the contrary. And though *our Way is charged with the want hereof*; yet *it is unjustly*, and by such as would bring us into their Way of Classical Churches, which is not proved to be the Ordinance of Christ, as this of the *Communion of Churches* is, and hath been found effectual, by the blessing of Christ, and so will be still. And though *this part of the Doctrine of the Church*, as they call it, concerning such a consociation, it being not proved to be the Doctrine of Christ, was never practised in these Churches: For without it, the Churches either have been, or might have been, and may be hereafter, kept in purity and peace with Brotherly love among themselves mutually, by the regular improving the communion of Churches, which is manifested to be the Ordinance of Christ, who hath given us perfect Rules in the New Testament, for the ordering of the communion of Christian Churches, which are sufficient for attainment of the ends, for which Christ hath appointed it, according to the second, third, fourth, eleventh, and twelfth Positions premised. With which, if this way of Consociation of Churches shall be clearly proved to agree (which I do not finde to be yet done) I shall readily and heartily close with it, and submit unto it. For it is onely the Truth that I search for, and desire to bear witness unto, that, when my time shall come to *lay down this earthly tabernacle* (which I expect daily) *I may give up my account with joy*. 2. And, if any Church be refractory, we have the help of the Civil Power, which is ordained of God for the just *punishment of those that do evil*, whether in Church or Common-wealth, *Rom.* 13. Every Ordinance of God hath Gods blessing annexed; which we cannot expect in this way, till it be proved to be Gods Ordinance, which yet is not done.

" Propos. 7. *The manner of the Churches agreement herein,* " *may be by the Churches open consenting unto the things here declared,* " *in Answer to this second Question; as also to what is said there-*

" *about, in Chap.* 15, 16. *of the* Platform of Diſcipline, *with refe-*
" *rence to what is before expreſſed in Propoſition* 5th.

Reply. If the Churches do expreſs their Agreement herein openly, they do voluntarily engage themſelves, and covenant to practiſe according to the things declared, not onely in the point of Church-communion, but alſo of ſuch conſociation as is here expreſſed, which they have need to ſee to be warranted by the Word, if they will act accordingly in faith, knowing that *whatſoever is not of faith, is ſin*, Rom. 14, 23. What is ſaid in the *Platform, chap.* 15 hath been, in part, examined before in *chap.* 16. 5.

" They ſay, *The Synods Directions and Determinations, ſo farre*
" *as conſonant to the Word of God, are to be received with reverence*
" *and ſubmiſſion, not onely for their agreement therewith*, &c. *but*
" *alſo ſecondarily, for the power whereby they are made*, &c.

Reply. I grant, that the *Synods Directions and Determinations, ſo farre as conſonant to the Word of God, are to be received with reverence and ſubmiſſion.* But what if the Members of Churches, to which they are ſent, do not finde them conſonant to the Word rightly underſtood and applied? Are they nevertheleſs ſtill bound to practiſe according to *the Synods Directions and Determinations*, becauſe the Synod concludeth that they are *conſonant to the Word?* I ſuppoſe, no Orthodox Synod, in theſe times, will arrogate to it ſelf ſuch infallible Aſſiſtance, as *the Apoſtles, being aſſembled with the Church at Jeruſalem*, had, *Acts* 15. (though they argued and concluded onely from Scripture, yet that Council could not erre in their underſtanding and applying Scripture, having ſuch guides as the Apoſtles were) but will confeſs that they may erre in their underſtanding and applying the Scriptures, whereupon they ſeem to ground their *Directions and Determinations.* And if ſo, it is the duty of every Church, and the Members thereof, to examine by the Scriptures whatſoever *Direction or Determination* is propounded by the Synod. If they finde that they are *conſonant to the Word of God*, they are bound by Gods Authority to receive them *with reverence and ſubmiſſion.* If otherwiſe, *we ought to obey God, rather then man*, Acts 5. 29. 2. This power of the Synod (though they ſay it is *but ſecondary*, and that it is for their agreement with the Word, which is the principal ground thereof, and

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without which their Directions and Determinations binde not at all, yet) they make so binding, that, if any Churches shall refuse to practise according to the Directions and Determinations of the Synod, (though they have strong grounds of dis-satisfaction about the Synods interpretation and application of the Scriptures alledged by them) they will *withdraw themselves from communion with them.* Whether such an authoritative urging their counsels upon Churches be warranted by Scripture, let the Reader enquire and consider: and, Whether it will agree with what themselves before declared, concerning *the unlawfulness of a total Separation from a true Church:* and, Whether there be need of it *to cure emergent Church-difficulties and differences*; seeing all that are godly will readily close with such Directions and Determinations of Synods, as are clearly consonant to the Word of God: and, if any obstinately will persist in their own wayes, contrary to the Word held forth to them by the Synod, the Civil Power is Gods Ordinance for *punishment of* such *evil doers*, that the Churches may be kept pure and peaceable, in the exercise of Church-communion among themselves in a Brotherly way. Which yet is no impediment to the Churches (and that by the declaratory Sentence of a Synod, that is, after due conviction of a Church that is *Heretical, Schismatical, Apostatical*, or the like, with *due patience exercised*) to *withdraw the right hand of fellowship* from such as make themselves worthy, by their obstinacy against the light clearly held forth from Scripture, to be *rejected*, as not true Churches of Christ. Yet this they may not regularly do, meerly for their Dissenting from the Determinations of the Synod upon conscientious grounds, and in lesser matters. What is before expressed in the fifth Proposition, hath been already examined.

"Propos. 8. concerneth *The manner of exercising and practising* "*that Communion, which this consent and agreement specially tendeth* "*unto, which*, they say, *may be, by making use occasionally of Elders,* "*or able Brethren of other Churches; or by the more solemn Meet-* "*ings of both Elders and Messengers, in lesser or greater Councils,* "*as the matter shall require.* Such Meetings, for the end specified, being rightly ordered, and carried on in a Brotherly way, by men sincerely affected to establish Truth with Peace in the

Churches

Churches of the Saints, according to the Rules given unto us by Jesus Christ, our Lord and Law-giver, I do fully approve, as of profitable use, by the Blessing of Christ, for the good of the Churches.

The Reverend Author's *POSTSCRIPT.*

Christian Reader,

THese Lines and Labours of Love (I trust) to the King of Saints, *and his* Subjects and Laws, *I leave with thee, with the wise perusall and consideration of them. The issue and success, I commit unto the onely wise God, and our Father in Jesus Christ, desiring all those into whose hands it may come, to receive nothing said by me, further then they shall finde it consonant to the Word of God in the Scripture, specially of the New Testament: And that, if they dissent in any particulars, they will gratifie me with notice thereof, together with their Reasons; whom they shall finde thankful for such help, and ready to embrace any Truth that is yet hidden from me; and that no man will suspect that I seek any thing in this* Essay, *but Truth with Peace, lest they become judges of evil thought. Farewell in our Lord Jesus, who is the Truth. Let his good Spirit lead us, and all his Churches and People, into wayes of Truth and Peace, and establish our goings in those wayes.* Amen.

Your assured Friend and Brother,

J. D.

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CONSIDERATIONS
UPON
THE SEVEN PROPOSITIONS
Concluded by the SYNOD ſitting at *BOSTON*, *June* 10th. 1662.

By the Reverend, Mr. NICHOLAS STREET, Teacher of the Church of Chriſt at *New-haven.*

I. THis Phraſe, *Members of the viſible Church*, in the firſt Propoſition, I take to be explained in the ſecond Propoſition.

II. By this Phraſe in the ſecond Propoſition, *Their Infant-ſeed*, I ſuppoſe is meant onely their legitimate infant-ſeed, and is not to be extended to illegitimate children; againſt which a ſtrong Argument may be gathered from *Deut.* 23. 2.

III. The ſecond Propoſition doth ſeem to diſtinguiſh of Members in particular Churches: Some are ſaid to be *Confederate viſible Believers*; whereby, I ſuppoſe, is meant, ſuch as have immediately and perſonally taken hold of the Covenant themſelves, both for themſelves, and for their ſeed: for it is manifeſt, that it is ſpoken of ſuch as are made contradiſtinct to an infant-ſeed, that cannot thus do. Some are ſaid to be *Their infant-ſeed*, (i.) *children in minority* &c. And how come theſe to be Members? The laſt words in the Propoſition do ſhew; which are, *Whoſe next Parents, one or both, are in Covenant*; which doth imply at leaſt, that they become Members in and by their next Parents covenanting for them. Hence the ground of the diſtinction of Membership into *Immediate*

and *Mediate* is very clear. The Argument may be thus framed: Such as is the *ratio formalis* of the Membership, such is the Membership, so may it be distinguished and denominated. But Confederation, which is the *ratio formalis* of the Membership, is immediate in the Parent, in the Childe mediate. *Ergo*.

A difference in Membership is granted, both in this second Proposition, and some others after; and if this distinction to express the difference be not proper, let some better be laid down, that doth more aptly and fully suit the nature of the thing, and we shall receive it. In the mean time we shall hold to this, as conceiving, that the admitting of it would be a good means to preserve the Churches in purity, to prevent many unprofitable and uncomfortable disputes, and other great inconveniences, which, the rejecting of it will unavoidably make way unto.

IV. This clause in the third Proposition, *When grown up, are personally under the Watch, Discipline, and Government of the Church*; had need be warily understood, and doth call for some clear explication. For, if it be meant that they are in the same way, and as fully under the *Discipline and Government of the Church*, as those who in their own persons have taken hold of the Covenant, it cannot be assented unto: For then, in case of such delinquency, as doth call for Excommunication in another Member, they are formally to be Excommunicated. But this may not be admitted. For,

1. Formal Excommunication doth not suit their state; they are within the Church onely *mediately*, by their Parents confederation: Therefore are not to be cast out of the Church *immediately and personally* by formal Excommunication. 2. Besides, they are, in respect of strength, *weak*; and in respect of state, *dead*: especially being considered as in this third Proposition, *without qualifications*, even such as are mentioned in the fifth Proposition, which yet are *separable from true and saving grace*. They are too weak to bear the weight and strength of that Censure, which is *mighty through God*, 2 Cor. 10. 4. it is to *put new wine into old bottles*, which Christ doth dislike in Spiritual matters, *Mat.* 9.

2. It seemeth to be very injurious to them, to lay them open to the highest Censure, and not to allow them proportionable priviledges.

3. The

3. The main end of Excommunication, when it paſſeth upon ſuch, is not like to be attained, which is, *the deſtruction of the fleſh, that the ſpirit may be ſaved*, 1 Cor. 5. 5. The Ordinance doth ſuppoſe the Subject of it to be *fleſh and ſpirit*; they who are conſidered as without qualifications to make them capable of Church-priviledges, as in this third Propoſition, cannot be looked at as other then *all fleſh*.

V. In the fourth Propoſition it is ſaid, *Theſe adult perſons are not therefore to be admitted to full Communion, becauſe they are and continue Members, without ſuch further qualifications as the Word of God requireth thereunto.* But whether the children of ſuch are to be baptized, or not, is not ſaid; and it is neceſſary that it ſhould have been expreſſed, that the ſenſe and meaning of the Synod might be rightly underſtood.

VI. To the fifth Propoſition many things may be ſaid.

1. This Propoſition may rationally be looked at, as holding forth the qualifications wanting to full Communion, mentioned in the fourth Propoſition: And if ſo, then it will follow, that ſuch as have theſe qualifications, have right to full Communion: if I miſs it, I would be thankful to him that ſhould ſhew me my miſtake; if I am right, and do rightly expreſs the ſenſe of that Propoſition, it were expedient that the Synod ſhould plainly and fully expreſs their meaning therein, to the underſtanding of all.

2. The qualifications are, *Underſtanding the Doctrine of Faith, and profeſſing their Aſſent thereunto*; *Not ſcandalous in life*.

1. There is more required in a Church-member, even in point of knowledge, then to *underſtand the Doctrine of Faith, and aſſent thereunto*. He ought, in a competent meaſure, to *underſtand Church-Order and Diſcipline appointed by Chriſt*, otherwiſe he cannot Covenant in judgement, or own the Covenant; neither doth he *know how to behave himſelf in the Houſe of God*, as a Member thereof.

2. The Devil doth *underſtand the Doctrine of Faith*, and doth *aſſent thereunto*, Jam. 2. 19.

3. *Not ſcandalous in life*, is wholly Negative, and may be ſaid of irrational Animals. *He* onely *that doth righteouſneſs*, poſitively, can be denominated *righteous*, 1 Joh. 3. 7.

4. Beſides all theſe, there muſt be *the work and grace of Faith* held forth, *Acts* 8. 37, 38. & 16. 31---34. before any medling with the Govenant, *Iſa.* 19.21.

3. It is ſaid, *And ſolemnly owning the Covenant*, &c. The Scripture ſpeaketh of *Entring into a Covenant*, 2 Chron. 15.12. of *Making a Covenant with the Lord*, 2 Chron. 29.10. and, *Before the Lord*, 2 Chron. 34.31. of *Taking hold of the Covenant*, *Iſa.* 56 4. Now if their *Owning the Covenant* be the ſame; then, not onely their children are to be baptized, but themſelves admitted to full Communion; if ſhort, then it is a meer humane invention, not warranted by the Word.

4. Upon ſuppoſition, that the qualifications expreſſed be found in them, it is ſaid, *Their children are to be baptized.* But

1. The firſt and ſecond Propoſitions are againſt it. The firſt Propoſition doth limit Baptiſm to *the Members of the viſible Church*: The ſecond Propoſition doth explain who are meant by *Members of the viſible Church according to Scripture*; 1. *Confederate viſible Believers in particular Churches*, (i.) ſuch as have perſonally and immediately Confederated for themſelves, as the laſt clauſe ſheweth. And 2. *Their Infant-ſeed*, (i.) *children in minority, whoſe next Parents, one or both, are in Covenant.* Now theſe mentioned in the fifth Propoſition, to whom Baptiſm is allowed, are neither the one nor the other. *Ergo.*

2. The *grace of Faith is wanting*, if there be no more then the qualifications before mentioned, and that is neceſſary to give their children right to Baptiſm, *Acts* 2.38,39.

3. *The children of ſuch are not to be baptized, who themſelves do live under great offence viſibly, and do not reform*, Exod. 20.5.

But ſo do theſe Parents, in not taking hold of the Covenant perſonally and immediately, for themſelves. Ergo.

It may eaſily and abundantly be proved, that ſuch as have been baptized in the Church, and have lived under precious means and great light, untill they are Married, and have children, and all this while have neglected the main thing that doth concern them, which is *to Believe*, and upon their Believing, *perſonally*, and for themſelves, to *take hold of the Covenant*, are under very great ſin and offence. But I willonely uſe one Argument, which is this:

Neglect

Neglect of taking hold of the Covenant, or of entring into Covenant now under Christ and the Gospel, is as gross a neglect, as great a sin, as much displeasing to God, as was the neglect of Circumcision, the sign of the Covenant before Christ. Grounds of it are:

1. The thing it self is as weighty, that I say not, more.

2. As fully under command as that, 1 *Joh.* 3.23. *Rom.* 10.9,10.

3. The neglect of it doth as necessarily and peremptorily infer Gods highest displeasure, and everlasting destruction, if continued in, as that, *Joh.* 3.36. *Mark* 16.16. *Heb.* 2.3.

But that neglect was gross, the sin great, and very displeasing to God, Gen. 17.14. *Exod.* 4.24---26. Ergo.

4. If the children of such are to be baptized; if their children again thus baptized, live to have children, themselves not *personally taking hold of the Covenant*, or not *entring into Covenant*, what shall become of them? shall they be baptized, or not?

1. *If not*; it is needful that it should be declared, that all may know where to stop, and to understand, that this Priviledge is not to exceed the *Third Generation*. Again, *if not*, it is strange that a childe should be begotten or born of a Member, and yet it self be no Member; or, if a Member, have no right to Baptism.

2. *If so*; it may be demanded, *By what right?* or, *Where is the ground of their right to Baptism? Not in the Grandfather, or Great-Grandfather*; that is generally disliked: and the second Proposition doth limit it otherwise; but in *the immediate Parent*, I suppose. But, *how is the right of these childrens Baptism founded upon him?* Not upon *his personal Confederating*; for it is supposed there is none: Nor upon *his owning the Covenant of his father*; for his father made no Covenant: he did onely *own the Covenant of his Parents*, and that gave the right of Baptism to his children, as is held forth in the fifth Proposition. It remaineth therefore, that this Parent of the *third Generation* doth own what his Parent of the *second Generation* (he can go no higher) hath done, and *what is that?* He *entred not into Covenant*, but onely *owned the Covenant that his father entred into*. And thus these last children, who are of the *fourth Generation*, do come to have right to Baptism, not by *their Parents Confederation*, as the *second sort* mentioned in the second Proposition; nor by *their Parents owning*

their fathers Covenant, as the *third ſort* ſpoken of in the fifth Propoſition; but *by theſe Parents* (of the *third Generation*) *owning their Parents* (of the *ſecond Generation*) *owning the Covenant of their fathers*, of the *firſt*. This ſeemeth to be an uncouth way, and very unpleaſant Divinity.

VII. The ſixth Propoſition I look at as an *Exception* to the fifth; otherwiſe it is croſs unto it, and againſt it. To this I ſay,

1. If there be any weight in the Arguments uſed under the *ſixth Conſideration*, againſt the baptizing of children, to whom the fifth Propoſition doth allow Baptiſm; then they are likewiſe of force againſt the baptizing of children mentioned in this ſixth Propoſition.

2. I cannot but take notice of the ſeveral ſorts of Memberſhip, all giving right to Baptiſm: *Two* in the ſecond Propoſition, a *Third* in the fifth; a *Fourth* in the ſixth: and if Memberſhip, *without perſonal Confederation by the ſeed of Confederate viſible Believers*, doth not end in the *third Generation*, then there is a *Fifth*, and a *Sixth ſort of Memberſhip*; and all theſe are differing one from the other. The two firſt are of God, and according to his Word, the reſt are not.

VIII. The laſt Propoſition ſeemeth to open a very wide gate in the Church, wider then God doth allow, *Iſa. 26. 2.* for though it requireth qualifications in ſuch Members who claim right to Baptiſm for their children in other Churches, by virtue of *Church-communion*, yet it is altogether ſilent of the qualifications of ſuch Churches themſelves, onely they muſt be *Orthodox*; that reſpects the *Doctrine of Faith* alone. There is much more to be attended: A Church may be *Orthodox in matters of Faith*, yet *Scandalous in Practice*: A whole Church may be *under Scandal*, as well as a particular perſon; and in that caſe another Church may *withdraw from it*, and have no communion either with it, or its Members. And this was, not long ſince, the Judgement and Practice of ſome of the chief Churches and Elders in the *Bay*.

Again, a Church may believe the main *Articles of Faith*, yet be ſo *defective in Diſcipline*, yea, ſo *oppoſite to Chriſts Government*, as to lay aſide his *Laws and Inſtitutions*, and ſet up the *Inventions and Traditions of men*: And likewiſe may have ſuch a *corrupt Conſti-*

tution,

tution, both in regard of *Matter*, *Open ſcandalous livers*; and likewiſe of *Form*, *No viſible expreſs Covenant according to the Rules of the Goſpel*, that there can be no ſuch communion held and maintained with ſuch a Church, or her Members holding communion with it, as is expreſſed in this ſeventh Propoſition, without manifeſt diſobedience to the Word of God, in theſe, and many other places, *Rev.* 18.4. 2 *Cor.*6.17. *Eph.*5.11.

If the Members of Orthodox Churches may, upon the terms expreſſed in the ſeventh Propoſition, claim Baptiſm for their children in our Churches, by virtue of *Church-communion*, then themſelves have right to communicate with us in the Lords Supper; and then what ſhould hinder but that we may, by virtue of *Church-communion*, occaſionally coming to any of theſe Orthodox Churches, have our children baptized in ſuch a Church, and our ſelves partake in the Supper of the Lord? Or, if we ſhould have occaſion to remove our Habitation to ſuch a place where ſuch an Orthodox Church is, why may we not joyn unto it, and have fellowſhip with it? And if we may ſo do, *New-England* Chriſtians are of all Chriſtians in the world *moſt miſerable* and fooliſh. We have *ſuffered many things in vain*, in leaving ſuch a Countrey for this; our Eſtates, Friends, Comforts there, to enjoy God, and Chriſt, and our Conſciences in the *Congregational-Way*, in a low afflicted condition in the Wilderneſs, for ſo many years together; and now we muſt loſe thoſe things which we have wrought, and may return to our former ſtate when we pleaſe: which the Lord preſerve us from.

F I N I S.

THere is now in the Preſs a ſmall Treatiſe, Entituled, *A Diſcourſe of the Laſt Judgement*, *on* Matth.25. 31. *to the end*, &c. By Mr. *SAMUEL WHITING*, Paſtor of the Church of Chriſt at *Lynne*; which will ſhortly be extant.

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